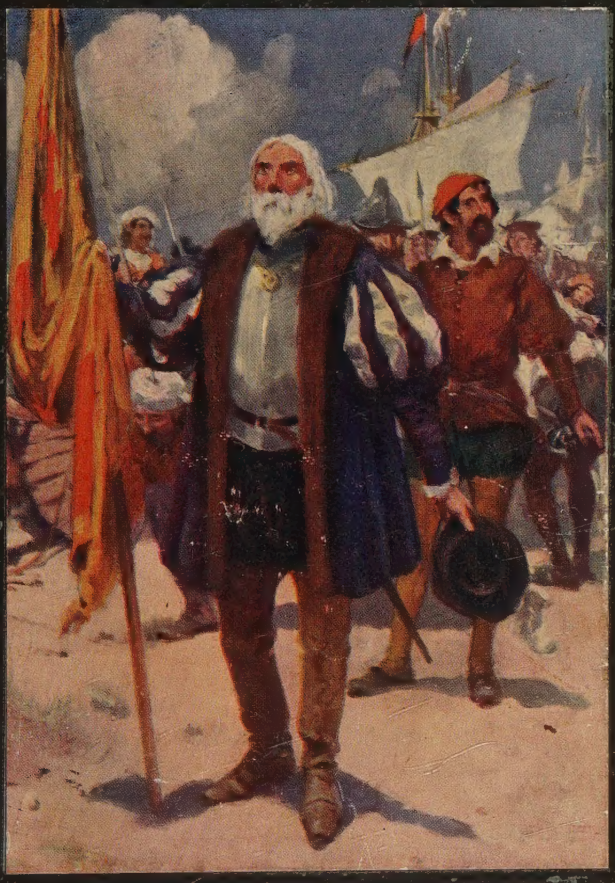
WESTWARD WITH COLUMBUS



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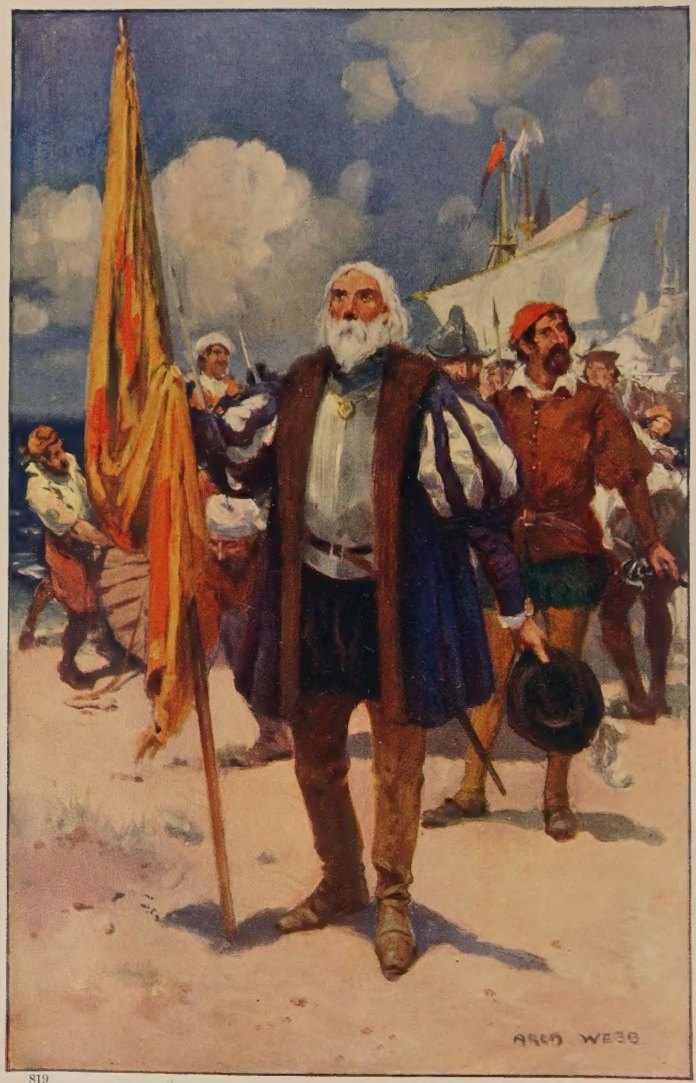

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COLUMBUS TAKES POSSESSION

Westward with Columbus

BY

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ILLUSTRATED BY ALFRED PEARSE

BLACKIE AND SON LIMITED

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WHAT, HO! THERE, LADS

What, ho! lads, gather round me for half a minute and keep your weather eyes lifting, for I want to say a word to you before you begin to read. No, I have no desire to play the fox, and get you to read a preface under a different name. I am no sneak, but a plain-spoken British sailor, and I hate a preface as much as any of you possibly can. I hate to have to write one, and I seldom if ever wade through one.

Well, when I was a boy—two or three years ago—I never could read history for pleasure; I hated genealogy; I could not bear controversy; dates I loathed, except the eating sort; I was not over-fond of geography, nor very much in love with hard long foreign words.

In my childhood's days ships were mostly built of wood, they are built of Bessemer steel and iron now; but boys, I take it, are still built on the same old lines, and of the same material. Therefore, lads, in telling you the story of Columbus, the great navigator and discoverer of the New World, I have tried to steer clear of all the things that youths do not like, and I have told the story in language as plain and simple as any I can command.

It is the duty of every British and American lad to know the story of Christopher Columbus. But duty apart, he was such a dear, good, honest, gentle-hearted man, and so brave and straightforward, that one cannot help loving him. A better boy's hero never could exist than he—and—and—but there! I know you will like him.

Is my story all true? I am glad you ask me that. Yes, I have tried to make it so. I know a little Spanish and a smattering of other languages, and have read a deal about Columbus one way and another. But I have avoided controversy, just trying to get as near to the truth in any disputed point as I could steer, and as my plain common-sense would take me.

Only, in the ship in which Columbus first sailed away to the West, were an Englishman and an Irishman—I was disappointed in not finding a Scot—and around their bit of history I have woven a little halo of romance.

Now, boys, you know me, and I think I know you. Pipe down!

GORDON STABLES.

Twyford, Berks.

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WESTWARD WITH COLUMBUS

BOOK I

CHAPTER I

THE CHIME OF THE EVENING BELLS

IT is the hour of evening prayer.

The day had been a very bright and beautiful one, in the end of August. But, as if weary of shining so long in an all but cloudless sky, the sun had gone down at last, leaving a horizon of the brightest orange fading above into a feeble pink, and anon into blue.

Darkly silhouetted against the orange light rise the jagged and serrated summits of the Ligurian Alps. Low down in many a fertile glen or ravine that trends shorewards from the mountains, twilight has already settled. Here, high among the rocks, great pine-trees grow, their needled foliage piled in horizontal masses above their brown stems; and here, too, cypress-trees stand like sentinels, but beneath, and near the winding pathways and brawling assertive little streamlets, flourish the olive, the vine, the orange, and the mulberry.

In these ravines stands many a quaint but humble hamlet, surrounded by gardens, fields, and orchards, every foot

and every tree of which are made the most of. In the woods above and behind ferns may grow and wild-flowers nod, but here nothing that is not of value may peep above the ground. Yet difficult it is to check the lavish luxuriance of nature, and up the balustrades of rude stone stairs, and around the rough pillars that support verandahs, ay, and along the roofs and over the chimneys, roses and other climbing flowers dispute every inch of space with the creeping vines.

In the doorways or on the stair-tops of some of those cottages stand bareheaded, barefooted, picturesquely dressed women, their hands above their eyes to shade them from the yellow sunset glare, as they gaze up the winding paths adown which slowly come the cows. From the vineyards, bearing laden baskets or tubs with leaves and fruit, labourers male and female may be seen wending homewards.

Homewards, too, from the woods, where they have rooted and fed all day, come strings of half-wild black pigs, the wisest and biggest pig leading; while farther up the ravines, where grass and heath grow on bare and rolling moors and hills, the shepherds see to the safety of their flocks.

But the song of the shepherd, and the merry conversation of the fruit-gatherers, and the gossip of the housewives cease for a time, and they piously cross themselves and mutter a prayer, as, softly up from the distant city, the notes mellowed by distance, rises the chime of the evening bells.

There are fewer people in the narrow streets of Genoa now, far less bustle and far less noise than filled them throughout all the hours of the busy day. The shouts of seamen are heard only at intervals in the harbour, the clang of the hammers in factories and yards has ceased, and hushed are the shouts and the strange falsetto-yells of

street vendors. But as the city seems sinking to repose in the orange light of eventide, the bells fill all the air with their iron voices. The clamour in some of the streets is almost deafening. Heard on distant hill-tops or far up the wooded glens, the sound is sweet and pleasant, but here it can scarcely be called musical, and certainly not unisonous: it is a medley of notes, loud, commanding, and authoritative.

But it ceases at last almost as suddenly as it commenced, and stillness falls over palaces and houses, over churches and convents, silence over the beautiful city, silence over sea and land.

Far out on the bay, but with her prow pointed landwards, is a boat, her small lateen sail spread out before the gentle evening breeze. Seated well forward, the better to trim the boat and attend to the sail if a puff should come, is a sturdy-looking and swarthy Genoese sailor, in loose and baggy garments, with cap of some red material such as fishermen wear, but his shapely legs and feet are bare. His eyes are as clear as a baby's, but, judging from his bronzed and weather-beaten countenance, they are eyes that have gazed into the teeth of many a gale of wind.

In the stern-sheets, his hand upon a rude tiller, sits a boy of about twelve years of age, dressed like a peasant, with long auburn locks afloat on his shoulders; with blue eyes, and a face the calm thoughtful beauty of which is not even marred by the broad brown band of freckles that cover nose and cheeks, and are dotted over even his fair brow and temples.

As we see him now, his glance is turned half wonderingly, half wistfully towards the distant hills or the romantic city that eastwards frowns majestically over the rocks and is scattered over the rising ground westwards, creeping low down to hug the beach and bay.

Just as we see the lad now, might he sit as a model of the youthful son of some ancient Danish sea-king. The boy who occupies the opposite seat is far more Italian in features than he. His eyes are dark, his hair like the raven's wing, his face refined and beautiful, and in expression, far more girlish than boyish.

They are poor lads both. Their homes are not in the Strada Nuova, and they are not marble palaces either, but small houses, near to the old gate of San Andrea, and just outside the city walls. The father of the first-mentioned boy is simply a weaver of woollen cloth of damask and of velvet — a rich and flourishing trade enough — while the other lad's father is a dealer in fine oils, in spices, in anchovies, and in the far-famed cheeses of Genoa. And each boy is being brought up to follow the business of his father.

Diego, the seaman, creeps aft carefully, for the boat is very small, and of no great breadth of beam, and seats himself on a thwart, then leaning forwards places one hand on the young helmsman's knee. A very pleasant smile lights up his face as he does so.

"Why that look of care and thought," he says, "on the face of my little friend? Has he not succeeded in enjoying himself this afternoon?"

"Ah! Diego, yes. I have enjoyed myself all too much I fear; and very often, you know, after pleasure comes punishment. What were my thoughts, you wish to know? They were many, old friend, and they were mixed. Behold you not the beauty of the scene, Diego, how strange and shadowy the mountains appear against the sunset's orange light? See how the tall sides and gables of palace and cathedral have caught the hue, and seem to flash it back across the waves on our larboard beam; note how the swelling seas are tipped with saffron. And look, Diego, at the surf that breaks at the feet of the dark rocks,

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COLUMBUS GOES A-FISHING WITH DIEGO

not more brightly yellow is the wax of our Ligurian bees than yonder surf."

The chime of the evening bells comes stealing over the water. Both boys reverently bend their heads, and even Diego, rough sailor-man though he be, breathes a low prayer.

"O, Diego," the boy continues, "how late it is! Sure enough the punishment will follow the pleasure. I almost dread to go home."

"Nay, nay, never fear, little one."

"This is the second time, old friend mine, within one week I have been absent from evening prayers."

"True, Cristoforo, true; and mayhap the fault was mine."

"Not thine, good Diego. The fates were against us, and the wind raged so high it blew our little sail away. Then for hours we had to pull hard against the tide, and, but for a boat from a French galley that took us in tow, ill indeed might it have fared with us."

"Yes, little friend, yes; and the sharks of these seas have sharp and ugly teeth, nor are they at all shy in using them. But see! there lies that between our feet which shall suffice to appease the wrath of even your parents, Cristoforo, and change their frowns to smiles. We have not had so large a catch of fish for many a day."

"My dear mother never frowns, Diego mine, and not for worlds would I bring the tears of sorrow to her eyes. Even father frowns but seldom, and when he does, it surely is for my good. But verily is his anger just if I present myself not at vespers."

The orange hue along the horizon grows deeper and deeper. The blue of the sky becomes dark; there is now no tinge of pink 'twixt the blue and the orange, and a long line of cloud high up in the east, that erst was of the deepest crimson, has changed to bronze, to brown, to gray. Black grow the shadows of the rocks, and night seems to

fall down even into the sea, filling up the hollows and levelling all. Then a star peeps out in the east.

But it is not on that star the wondering lad's eyes are fixed, but upon the deep unfathomable glory of the orange west.

"Far far beyond that orange sky what is there?"

He seems speaking only to himself, but Diego replies.

"The fair land of France, little friend."

Cristoforo does not turn his eyes from the horizon. It is to the very sky itself he appears to appeal for an answer to his next question.

"And beyond that?"

"The sea, the sea."

"And still beyond?"

"The sea, the sea, still still the sea."

"But the ocean must end somewhere?"

"Agnosco, agnosco, as the Greek priest says. No one has ever been there to tell us, Cristoforo, or of those who have been, none has e'er returned. I have been told that in the far far beyond, the ocean ends in eternity, that a ship venturing too near to the ultimate, is caught in the merciless currents and borne swiftly on and on and on—ah! by our Lady, I tremble to think of it—on and on into a region of darkness more utter, more awful than the plague of Egypt, and that with the very swiftness of her course she becomes enveloped in flames, speedily to sink in the inky waters."

"And the crews, are they always drowned?"

"Time with them ends, eternity begins."

The man piously made the sign of the cross, and now busied himself counting the take of shining fish that lay in the bottom of the boat, as if by attention to things visible and mundane he would banish from his mind all thoughts of the mysterious and eternal.

For a short time longer Cristoforo kept his eyes on the horizon, then he burst into a merry laugh.

"I do not believe it! I do not believe it!" he cried. "Some day I mean to find it all out when I become a man. Come, Giacomo, what think you?"

A languid smile stole over his companion's handsome face.

"I do not think," the boy answered. "It is best not to think. To think is not my business, but the business of the priests. I live to enjoy life. I like each day as it comes. Morning and noon and evening the good father sends me food. Often I have pleasure too. I love my boat. I love the dance and the song, and I dearly love the sunshine, and the trees and birds and flowers. But to think—no, that would bring gray hairs to my head, and wrinkles to my eyes and brow before I was old."

Cristoforo laughed once more—right merrily now.

He touched Diego lightly on the shoulder.

"O greedy of gain," he said. "But come, share them out, and let our friend Giacomo have the largest lot for that good speech he has just made. By our Lady, as you say, Diego, many such long speeches as that would bring my neighbour down to the grave. Ah! see fortune favours us now. The breeze comes at last. Sing, Giacomo, sing. I love to hear your voice, it is so like a girl's. Nay, nay, never look cross, but sing, friend, sing."

A cat's-paw stole over the water, caught the boat and sent it merrily on. The light wind increased to a gentle breeze, the even surface of the ocean rollers became stippled now into a myriad little lines of orange light. Diego tightened the sheet, Cristoforo put down the helm, and Giacomo burst into song just as a happy bird might. A merry little song, with a rolling refrain, all vowels, in which his companions joined.

Cristoforo forgot everything then — forgot the orange sky, the far beyond, his own possible future: forgot even the fish he had caught, and the probable displeasure of his parents at his absence from evening prayers.

Forgot all in that droll and merry laughing chorus:

"Eē, ăy, ăy, ōh—ŏ. Ha! ha! ha!
Eē, ăy, ăy, ōh—ŏ. Ho! ho! ho!
Eē, ăy, ăy, ōh—ŏ—HO!"

The loud "HO!" was a final one.

The thunder of the breakers on the beach was a bold bass to it. For high above them the houses now towered and the orange in the sky had faded and gone.

In a minute more, the little boat was hauled high and dry on the shore and made secure for the night.

Farewell greetings were interchanged. Diego shouldered his oars and trudged off westwards, and the two boys, each carrying his string of silvery-scaled fish, went onwards till they reached the double-towered gate of San Andrea, and shortly after this they parted.

CHAPTER II.

"THAT VOICE IS EVER IN MY EAR."

THE work of Cristoforo's father was over for the day. The apprentices had gone home, most of them living in the San Stefano quarter, outside the great gate, or in the humbler parts of the city itself. One young lad, however, only a year or two older than Cristoforo himself, had a bed in the lower story of the building. This was a big barn of a place, with a shed-like door opening on to the

street and another door giving exit behind and leading into a well-cultivated, though not very large garden, which went backward towards the city wall.

Antonio, as this boy was called, was not unlike Giacomo in his philosophical ways of action and thought. He evidently believed he had been put into the world to enjoy himself as much as possible, and to do no more work than was absolutely necessary. Indoors, that is. Out of doors he was quite another being, and Domenico Colombo, his master, was not slow in finding this out, and consequently looked upon him as much the same sort of servant as our modern message boy is. There are boys who really seem to be entirely unfitted by nature for working under a roof. Over and over again Antonio had gone to sleep over the hand-loom, and at such times his brother apprentices used to play all kinds of tricks on the poor lad, a common one being to chalk and soot his face, giving him huge eyebrows, a fierce moustache, and wrinkles on his cheeks and brow.

When master's step was heard on the paved street outside, or his voice heard singing, they would wake the youth, who immediately pretended that he was and had been extremely busy. Domenico could not but laugh at the lad's appearance, but he chid the apprentices all the same.

Cristoforo's father was really a good master to those under him, but he was also a strictly business one, and would have the work well done and up to time.

He was honoured and respected by all who knew him, and trusted by his patrons, and he would not have belied that trust for all he was worth. To his apprentices his word was law, and more than once, too, had they found out to their cost that his strong arm, wielding a leathern strap or cane, could vindicate the rules he laid down.

Probably, however, there was no fault he ever punished by actual flagellation save that of deceit. Domenico hated

a truckler or sneak as he hated a knave, and held that the one was first cousin to the other. If he did punish a youth he did it most satisfactorily—to himself at all events. Apprentices of the present day would take but ill with a caning, I fear, and would go blubbering to the nearest magistrate or policeman; but the lads of ancient Genoa were made of sterner stuff, and Domenico's apprentices knew exactly how to appreciate a caning, and knew, too, that their master would no more think of giving them one blow more than they merited than he would dream of measuring out to a priest or patron a yard of broad-cloth, beyond that which was ordered and would be paid for.

But poor Antonio's best endeavour was but a struggle between the spirit that was willing to work and the flesh that was too weak, and Domenico was ever more ready to pity him than to feel anger against him.

Well, after all a weaver's life in those days was a very unambitious and a very humdrum one. Day after day, year in year out, to sit or stand half-bent by the hand-loom and listen to its ceaseless clack-clack was very monotonous and tiresome. But then Domenico was doing well. He was doing well even in a worldly point of view, and if we go into spiritual matters I must say at once that both he and his wife had chosen the good part that could not be taken from them. They looked upon this life as a mere term of probation, during which if they did the duties inseparable from their lot they did well, and should be received at last into a house not made with hands, the joys of which would be greater far than any they could imagine or dream of.

Yes, Domenico Colombo was doing well.

The man was the son of a farmer of Terrarossa. For some reason or another, I know not what, he went to live in a small fishing town not a long distance from Genoa. It

might have been supposed that Domenico, his ears assailed morn, noon, and night by the ceaseless song of the sea, might have dreamt of a life on the ocean wave, and that, as his father ploughed the land, so in time he would come to plough the sea. It was otherwise ordered.

He chose to become a wool merchant and weaver. There is certainly less romance about the song of the shuttle than about the song of the sea, but upon the whole the profession of weaver was a far less risky one than that of seaman, and a less sinful. The sailors of those days, as we shall presently see, were as reckless a class of men as ever lived, and certainly never stuck at trifles: so that if Domenico was reared in a God-fearing way—and of this I have no doubt at all—I do not wonder at his humble choice.

At all events, this good fellow seems to have fully appreciated the truth of the saying, that if a thing is worth doing at all it is worth doing well. So he stuck to his work, and from being apprentice himself he soon became master with at least one apprentice under him.

But better fortune was still to be his lot, and if you will read on I shall tell you how it all fell out.

You have heard, no doubt, of the wide and beautiful strath—the Val di Bisagno—that lies to the north and a little east of Genoa, and through which a river of the same name flows and falls into the sea near to the town. It was a fertile and lovely valley even in those days, and inhabited by an industrious and peaceable population, who were content to be left alone to till their vineyards, and their farms, and their olive gardens, and, as much as possible, to marry and intermarry among themselves. For they were just as independent as they were peaceful.

Although they were under and subject to the Doge of Genoa, who lived when at home in his great palace in the city, they were permitted the advantages—if there be any

advantages in it—of a species of home rule, and annually they chose a new mayor or abbot, the old one retiring into private life.

On the day of election the whole valley was *en gala*, and the lads and lasses, you may be sure, were togged out in their very best.

As upon this particular anniversary there was sure to be a bit of genuine fun going on, the apprentices and young blades and bloods from the city crowded out on foot or on horseback or driving, and spent many hours in the valley, returning in the evening with or before the procession to the city.

Domenico Colombo used on these occasions to give himself and his apprentice a holiday. Very likely they had worked a little harder for it beforehand. Anyhow they both went to the Val di Bisagno, though not necessarily together.

Now one of these holidays turned out to be big with Domenico's fate. It was a very bright and sunny day, and he had wandered about and seen everything and enjoyed himself most thoroughly. It was very pleasant and enjoyable down by the green banks of the river, where the ceremony of election was gone through. This ceremony was simplicity itself in the main; for the retiring magistrate and the newly-elected one simply mounted two stones and standing face to face interchanged some friendly salaams and courtesies, after which the former presented the standard of St. George to his successor, and the people acclaimed and shouted, just as people on such occasions always do.

Meanwhile a tree had been cut down and placed upon a suitable tumbril, to which oxen were attached. The oxen and the tree itself were all hung round and decorated with flowers, and in the midst of a procession as happy as gay, the floral offering was taken to the city, the new abbot

accompanying it. It was hauled into the grounds of the palace, and there the doge condescended to meet his friends, and a very pretty palaver was the consequence.

After this the abbot retired in high glee, and the doge proceeded to enjoy himself among his own people. Bent the historian does not say they dined, but we will suppose they did, and finally they heaped fuel around the tree, and broke bottles of wine over it, and set fire to it, and the young folks were then all as merry as merry could be.

On the evening of the day that became so eventful to Domenico, a certain young man called Guglielmo Fontana-rossa, with his sister Susanna, both children of a silk-weaver who lived in the valley, were returning home somewhat late after having seen all the fun, when, in a narrow street, they were met by a trio of ruffling young bloods, who at once set up a shout on seeing them, and proceeded to what would nowadays be termed rough play. Guglielmo was a sturdy fellow, however, and but little inclined to stand any nonsense. He soon floored one fellow, albeit he was armed with a kind of rapier or sword. Then he quickly drew his sister into a corner under a niche, in which burned a little oil-lamp sacred to one of the saints.

The friends of the discomfited blood were inclined to give William, as we may call him, but small grace, but rather to mete out to him the *coup de grace;* and ill would it have fared with the plucky young silk-weaver had not, in the very nick of time, Domenico himself dashed round the corner. He threw one assailant into the gutter and stood *en garde* to receive the other, but all three now probably came to the speedy conclusion that discretion was the better part of valour, for they fled incontinently.

Well now, the reader can guess what the *finale* to this pretty and romantic little adventure was. Anyone could. Of course Domenico walked half-way home with William

and his sister, who was exceedingly pretty, and of course he was invited to return to see the family another day, and of course he fell in love with Susanna. The girl's father, finding that Domenico was a most worthy and deserving young citizen of Genoa, not only did not withhold his consent, but, being tolerably well-to-do, he even dowered the bride with land and money.

Domenico, after his marriage, took up his residence at the place where we now find him as our story opens, and where in due time Cristoforo was born and lived and grew.

Now I am quite convinced that there is no religion more genuine, none that will better stand the test of time and all the rude shocks one's mind has to sustain in life, than the prayerful, trusting, simple religion learned at the mother's knee, if the child can be made to feel that his prayers are not a mere penance, but that, while kneeling there, he is really in the presence of a great and a good Being, who careth for him, and into whose hand he may confidently trust both his body and his soul.

It was at his mother's knee that Christopher Columbus, as we like to call him, first found faith, a faith that cheered him in every sorrow and trial, and sustained him on his dying bed.

It is not to be wondered at that he dearly loved and honoured the mother who shed the beams of her own affection and spiritual belief over his young mind, who told him the simple story of our fall and of life everlasting through the love of a gentle Saviour.

The boy loved his father too, and respected him, but—there was nobody like mother.

On the evening of that day on which Cristoforo's boat was delayed at sea, after finishing his work and arranging everything for the labours and duties of another day, Domenico went upstairs, and soon Giovanni and Bartolomeo,

our hero's younger brothers, went to bed; so that the father and mother were left alone in the room on the first floor.

The jalousies were open, so that, as the two sat together by the window and twilight deepened into night, they could see the stars and the moon too that had slowly arisen in the east, and was shedding its soft light over palace wall and towers.

There was but a feeble light in the room, only a double wick attached to a button and floating in a crystal vase of oil. But the worthy couple cared little for any light. They had been married over thirteen years, but might have been called lovers yet.

"How beautiful the moon is rising red over yonder!" said Susanna. "And how very bright the stars!"

"Yes, wife—yes."

"By the by, Susanna," he added after a pause, "our boy stays long. I like not his absence from evening prayers."

"Nor I, husband. But without doubt he has been delayed in some way."

"Shall I scold him or you?"

"Ah! neither, Domenico mine. I'll warrant the lad brings some good excuse."

"Good and true?"

"Yes. Of his truth I am assured, as I am of yours."

"It is well. But, dear wife, it oftentimes concerns me to think that our boy takes not kindly nor over-willingly to the trade of his father. Think you he has too much school work, or that he is too much taught in science by the monks, and from the translations he doth so read and pore over?"

"From the monks of San Stefano, husband, he can learn nought but good."

"So far as religion is concerned, yes. But do not these good men trifle also with studies that for a weaver lad had better be left alone?"

His wife sighed. What her husband said was only too true. Of this she was fully aware.

"Do we well to keep the lad longer at school?"

"I cannot answer, husband mine. It was but the day before yesterday he told me his greatest ambition was to go to the University of Pavia."

"But you lent him no word of encouragement?"

"Nay, Domenico, nay. Although I know the boy's thirst for knowledge is very great, I know also that our means are not fit to cope with it, and that Pavia is out of the question. But courage, husband, courage; you know the lad is more often with me than with you. So I know him best, and although he cares not a deal for the loom on which you work below, that little silk loom of mine—on which, alas! I now do so little—has become an object of great attraction to him."

"And you think he will become a silk-weaver?"

"That I do. And I am willing to teach him. He loves to be near me, and that itself will be an incentive to him to learn."

"Ah, dear wife, you have taken a burden of care off my mind."

"Hark! Domenico, I can hear Cristoforo's step on the street. Say not a word to him about being late."

A minute or two afterwards there came a tapping to one of the doors of the lower room, and Antonio, well knowing who was there, sprang up and at once admitted the boy.

"What a day of it we've had, Antonio! Look, behold this huge string of fish! Are they not beautiful? But go to bed, Antonio. The night air blows fresh from off the sea. I will go and make my peace with father."

Still holding his string of fish in his left hand, Cristoforo entered his parents' room and walked directly towards them, and stood there in silence for a few seconds with bended head.

The moon had climbed higher over the eastern hills and cast a flood of light upon the boy's figure, so that his fair brow shone like snow.

Domenico broke the silence.

"Come nearer, boy. Nay, nay, I am not angry. I only was—vexed."

"O, father mine, I am so sorry! Indeed, indeed, I would not willingly vex you."

There was a glister of tears in his blue eyes as he looked up, but nothing of fear, nothing of cringing. "I am much in the wrong, but the fish rose so freely to our bait, and we could not leave the bank. The wind that we trusted to almost failed us, and did not blow till the evening bells chimed over the sea."

"Say no more, lad, say no more. Salute your mother, and sit you down. Yes, indeed, beautiful fish, boy!—beautiful!—

"And mother tells me you desire to become, not a cloth-weaver, but a weaver of charming silks with rare dyes. Is it so, Cristoforo? Is it your chief desire?"

"Father, I would be anything to please mother; and so happy am I now in that you are not angry with me, but have forgiveness and kindness in your eyes, that I feel I could even promise to become a cloth-weaver. But—"

"But what, boy? Speak out, and manfully."

"It is not my chief desire to become a weaver even of beautiful silk, father."

He was silent for a time. He went nearer to his mother. She looked up and her sad eyes met his glance. He was close to her now, as close as close could be, his arms were round her neck, his head was on her shoulder.

Still no one spoke just yet.

Footsteps could be heard distinctly on the street even at a distance, there was the loud chirping of crickets coming up from below, and now and then a shrill scream rising on the night air, probably the voice of a sentinel. Columbus never all his life forgot that evening, nor those sounds, simple though they were.

"Mother, father," he said at last, "I would like to—be—a sailor."

"Eheu!" sighed Domenico. "The best and bravest of our Genoese youth ever talk thus. The best and bravest leave us. They flatter themselves that when they make their fortunes they will return and settle down in their own land or city. They are lured away by promises of gold, or they become enamoured of a life of wild adventure. But, ah me! how very very few return! They fall by the sword, by gun, or by pestilence; or the cruel ocean swallows them up, and their friends on shore are left to weep or to hope, till hopes deferred make sick the heart, and they too sink into the cold grave."

"But, father mine, it is not the wish to have gold—much though I should like it for mother's sake and yours—that makes me long to go to sea. It is not even fondness for wild adventure—it is simply that something keeps talking to me and telling me that I must come to sea. It may be destiny or fate, father; but that voice is ever in my ear, a voice that says, 'Come, come!' The waves breaking on the beach repeat it; I hear the words in the very winds; I hear them in the wild-birds' cry, ay, and in my dreams at night."

A tear fell on his hand.

"Mother, mother," cried Cristoforo, impulsively kneeling before her, "I have made you cry; I am selfish, I am an ingrate! Mother dear, forgive your boy!"

The father drew his chair closer to the mother's. The

boy stood between, with an arm on the shoulder of each, and their arms wound round his waist.

The moon rose higher and higher, and long before they had ceased talking the stars seemed to Cristoforo to shine with a radiance and lustre they had never before exhibited.

For the boy had gained his parents' consent to go to sea on trial when he should be a year or two older.

And hardly a wink did poor Cristoforo sleep that night for thinking of the glorious future which he doubted not lay before him.

Glorious? Yes. But alas! it was well for him he did not know all that the future had in store for him.

CHAPTER III.

"THERE IS NO MOTHER ON EARTH LIKE MINE."

I HAVE no real authority for saying that my hero was a very bright or a very clever boy. But what matters that, dear reader mine? He was steadfast and plodding at his work, and even at the age of twelve had about mastered all that the schoolmasters in the San Stefano district could teach him. He could read and write well, he was a fair arithmetician; was grounded in Latin, the great key to all the southern tongues; and was versed in the geography of the world as it was then known, from far Cathay in the East to the shores of France in the Western world; and above all this, he had learned a smattering of drawing, especially the drawing of maps, from some of the monks.

Cristoforo was a great favourite with the monks. He used to delight to visit them in their cells and refectories, and,

though not much of a talker himself, he was an excellent listener.

It must not be supposed, however, that the monks of those days knew a very great deal about the world. In fact they would have considered it a sin to go far away from the traditions that had been handed down to them. Why should they dare to pull aside the veil of mystery that a Higher Power had hung between them and regions wherein dwelt heathendom, evil men, and evil beasts? Their duty was to be content themselves, and to preach the religion of love and contentment to all who were under their spiritual authority.

. . . . . .

Although Cristoforo had not slept a very great deal, he was up betimes next morning nevertheless. He rose with the lark. Figuratively speaking that is, for at the season of the year when they do not sing and have no nests to look after, larks are by no means very early birds in Italy.

Even before the boy was quite wide awake there came to his mind an indefinable rush of joy. He felt far more happy than usual, and it was some minutes before he could quite understand why. Then he suddenly remembered the conversation he had had with his parents on the previous evening, and as he hurried on his clothes—his younger brothers had already gone below—he burst into song, the self-same merry laughing refrain he had taken part in while returning from the fishing-bank. Bartolomeo came in while he yet was singing and dressing.

"My brother is merry this morning?" he ventured.

"O, Bart," said Cristoforo, pausing and putting an arm round his young brother's neck, for he was very fond of the lad, "hasn't mother told you? But of course she wouldn't just yet. Well, I'm going to be a sailor, a real sailor."

Bartolomeo looked as if he wanted to cry badly, and so Cristoforo seated him on the edge of the bed, and sat down beside him, and spoke many comforting things to him, and then told him such wonderful stories of the sea and such strange tales of the islands and countries he meant to visit, and even to discover, that Bart choked down his tears, and presently was smiling and finally laughing aloud.

"Yes," said Bart at last, "I know that you will bring me and mother strange and beautiful things from far-off countries; but, brother mine, that won't be enough. I will not let you go at all unless you make me just one promise."

"And that is—?"

"That when you have discovered some of these great and lovely new lands which you tell me lie away in the West, like the Garden of Hesperides that teacher talks about, you must return and take me there too, so that I also may see the wonders of a new world."

Cristoforo promised, then kissed his brother, and hand-in hand they went together down to the lower room. Our hero carried his happiness with him to the breakfast-table, where he was more merry than was his wont, so that more than once he made his brothers laugh, and his grave and reverent father smile. Nay, even his mother smiled at times at the boy's sallies of wit and humour. A half-suppressed sigh, however, in every case followed her smile. She knew right well the cause of Cristoforo's flow of spirits, and he was well aware she did, for there was nothing that passed through the mind of either mother or son that could be hidden from the other.

After breakfast was finished the two younger boys ran off to school, but Cristoforo lingered behind.

"Mother mine," he said when alone with the loved one, "I have made you unhappy. Say you will not be unhappy,

mother, else I will think no more of going to sea, but will stay at home and help you with the silk-loom."

"Nay, nay, dear son; all the world over mothers have to part with their boys. It is nature, and we must not rebel. The young birds leave the nest and fly away, the young deer on the mountains leave their dams and seek for pastures new; this likewise is nature. I would not have my boy change his mind now for anything. Besides, Cristoforo, you are not going away yet for quite a long time; and when you do, you will often come back and spend many weeks with us. And you must know that when you are upon the wild deep sea, I shall pray for you and always feel that I am near you."

"And I shall pray for you, mother, and always think I see you."

"Now run off to school, because this afternoon you are going to the Villa Nuova, up the beautiful Val di Bisagno, on business for your father. Then all the rest of the evening you can have to yourself until—"

"Until prayer? I know, mother; I know."

And hastily kissing his mother again, the lad ran off to school.

Probably Cristoforo is to be excused if on this particular day he did not pay as much attention as usual to his studies. He was too full of his newly-acquired freedom to think of anything save his own future prospects. He already fancied himself on some fleet caravel, with its white sails outspread before the breeze, bounding over the blue waters of the Mediterranean. He should be but a boy on board at first, it may be said, only a boy! A boy on board? What of that? There is no boy on board any ship who, if he be a sailor-born, if he feels himself a sailor at heart, does not feel at the same time that the ship belongs to him, to him alone, and that he is sailing-master and captain both in one—ay, and lord

of the winds and master of the waves that, green and foam-crested, go singing past the ship. Show me an apprentice seaman who does not have some such thoughts as these, and I will show you a boy who is more fitted to stay at home and measure tape or attend to the cow-house and stable.

As Cristoforo was returning from school, he met his little friend Giacomo Bavarello.

"What, ho! Giacomo, whither away?" he cried, as soon as he had reached within hail of him.

"Away up the Val to the Villa Nuova. There is to be a marriage there soon, and master sends me with a letter."

"Oh, glad am I, for thither I go too. How strange! But go on, Giacomo—go on. I shall soon eat my meal and overtake you. I am in form to run to-day."

"It is a long way to Villa Nuova."

"Yes, and that is the best of it, because if we run we will make time to go and see the galleys. Diego half-promised yester morn he would find an excuse to go on board and take us with him."

Cristoforo received his father's commands before he sat down to his dinner. And he certainly lost no time in eating. The fluid portion of the meal he swallowed, the solid he stowed away in his bag, to eat as he dashed along the road in pursuit of Giacomo. Our young hero's digestion was a good one; almost anybody can make a peripatetic dinner, that is, walk about while eating, but probably few boys could eat a hearty meal while playing at hare and hounds.

Cristoforo overhauled his young friend before he had gone much more than a mile up the beautiful valley. Beautiful though it might be, however, and fond though Cristoforo was of ferns and wild-flowers, he paused not to-day to admire anything, and both lads started off along the road at a swinging trot, often taking a short cut through

a field or even a cypress grove, and slackened not their speed until they stood at last in presence of the owner of the villa.

He received them very kindly, made them rest a little while he wrote a letter, and noticing how warm they were, even called for wine and water for them.

The boys were quite fresh when they started again, and the road being now chiefly downhill, they reached the town in a surprisingly short time.

They halted when they came to a spot from which they could get a good view of the galleys, and were just wondering where they could find Diego, when that worthy sailor and boatman placed a hand on Cristoforo's shoulder.

"Right glad I am to meet you here, boys."

"Oh, and so are we. And you can get on board one of the wonderful war-galleys?"

"That can I, and take you too. I go to see Prince John of Calabria himself, who will intrust me with a letter of importance to take to a distant part of the coast. So follow me, there is but small time to lose."

Giacomo and Diego walked on towards the beach, but Cristoforo stayed behind for a brief space, the better to admire the dozen war-galleys that lay in the bay beneath him. They were nearly all ready for sea, and in a few weeks' time, under the protection of the flag of France, would start down the Levant, along the Italian shores betwixt Corsica, Sardinia, and the mainland, until they should reach and carry war into the Bay of Naples itself.

These war-galleys had been built at Genoa for this expedition.

It is very difficult, without the aid of diagrams, to describe the appearance and fittings of these war-boats. Happily it is not necessary to do so, but, according to the accounts of old writers, they must have been exceedingly handsome

as well as spiteful-looking. I have called them boats, and boats they really were, about one hundred to a hundred and thirty feet long, and in breadth of beam only not more than fifteen feet, but with an outrigger deck above, on which the fighting-men could stand.

On each side were five-and-twenty diagonal benches for the rowers, each having a single oar; from the battery in the bows to the castle and carried aft was a kind of bridge, right in the keel-line of the vessel, so that the officers could walk from one end of the galley to the other.

The galleys were of no great height, and quite unfitted to stand much of storm at sea. Though built for speed, the propulsion of these great war-canoes must have been very hard work indeed in a sea-way.

Cristoforo was struck almost dumb with wonder and admiration at all he saw on young Prince John's galley, and when this naval hero himself placed a hand on his head and spoke to him kindly, his cup of bliss seemed running over.

"By our Lady," said the prince, "a comely youth indeed, and strong in limb. Of what calling or trade are you, boy?"

"I am going to be a sailor," answered Cristoforo boldly, though turning red with joy and excitement.

"Good, indeed. Wert thou but a trifle older, we should have you to be our own particular page. But see to this letter, good Diego," he continued, turning away from the boys, "and see to it at once."

This was a knightly dismissal, and in a few minutes more Diego's boat was speeding shorewards.

. . . . . .

The Genoese Republic at this time was a country of no little power, and could well hold its own by sea if not by land.

As to ship-building and fitting, the city itself must have been a sort of ancient Glasgow and Portsmouth combined, for we cannot read the histories of either England, France, or Spain without being told about Genoese merchantmen and war-caracks, and brave reckless Genoese sailors.

In the early part of the century in which Christopher Columbus first saw the light of day, while Henry the Fifth reigned in England, and was at war with France, that monarch did much to increase the power of his navy, not only by adding to the number of ships, but in building vessels of greater power. Henry was well aware that the navy had ever been his battles' front, and that he must never lose command of the Channel—that thin silver streak which divided his country from that of his proud foes, just as it divides Britain of the present day from those who otherwise would speedily lower the meteor flag of England. Campbell the poet was not about in those days, else might have King Henry V. sung with him:—

"Britannia needs no bulwarks,
No towers along the steep,
Her march is o'er the mountain waves,
Her home is on the deep.
With thunders from her native oak,
She quells the floods below,—
As they roar on the shore,
When the stormy winds do blow;
When the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow."

That must have been a noble fleet which Henry got together in 1415 to fight against the French. A noble and gallant fleet for those days, and picturesque in the extreme. No less than fourteen hundred ships!

In the month of August of the year following, we find the fleet bearing away from Beachy Head on the wings of

a favouring breeze, under command of the Duke of Bedford, under whom were the archers and men-at-arms, and Sir Walter Hungerford, who was admiral of the fleet. They sailed for the Seine, and reconnoitred the enemy the same evening, attacking in full force next day after prayers.

And it is in this great naval battle that Genoese caracks are specially mentioned, for they were far higher than the English ships, so that our good fellows could hardly reach their foes with their lances. It was a fearful fight. There was a bit of a sea-way on at the time too, so that as the ships grappled together their sides dashed one against the other. Hand to hand they fought for five long hours—"man to man, lance to lance, arrow to arrow, dart to dart, stone to stone, iron to lead."

Does it not make your British blood tingle, boys, to read of such a battle as this? It does mine. I feel I should have liked to have been there. But does it not make you proud of your country, to learn that the strength, the physique, and staying powers of the English prevailed at last, and that not only the French but the Genoese also—as many as could —took to flight?

It is but fair to Genoa, however, to state that the Frenchmen were the first to fly. Of these latter they say that fifteen hundred were killed and four hundred taken prisoners. The biggest carack of all, called *The Black Mountain*, struck on a sand-bank and broke up, or touched a rock, backed astern, and foundered.

We hear again of the bold and ubiquitous Genoese in a battle betwixt the English and French that took place the very year after the victory I have just described. Not only was the French admiral captured, but four of the largest Genoese

> "Caracks, horrible, great, and stout,
> . . well-stuffed and arrayed."

I am not quite sure what the ancient bard means by the expression "well-stuffed." But the Genoese caracks captured by the Earl of Huntingdon in this battle were stuffed to very good purpose, for on board of them was found enough gold to pay the whole of the English navy for three months to come.

But to come down to times nearer to our hero Christopher Columbus. Only the year before that on which our story opens, Henry VI. being now King of England, the Earl of Warwick, who was admiral of the fleet, while cruising down south in our channel, sighted five noble caracks, two of which were Spanish and three Genoese.

Here was a chance for prize-money, the English must have thought, coupled with honour and glory. And so, after prayers and the usual preparations and preliminaries, the battle began.

Well, fourteen ships against five were fearful odds, but bravely fought the Spaniards and also the Genoese. Night and darkness only put a temporary end to the terrible tulzie, and it was renewed at daybreak, when, being completely surrounded, all the caracks fell into the hands of the English. One thousand of the enemy are said to have been killed, and I can easily believe it. The Italians probably asked for no quarter, and received none. But the cargoes of these caracks were valued at ten thousand pounds! It is said that on this occasion the English lost only fifty men in killed; but then history is all so very one-sided.

At the time Cristoforo and his friend went on board Prince John's galley with bold Diego, Genoa was said to be under the protection of France. And dearly enough did the French make the Genoese pay for this protection, and for lending a helping hand to fight the foes of France, wherever on the ocean wide they found them.

Well, the visit of the two lads to the war-galleys was but a brief one after all, but it was quite enough to impress Cristoforo indelibly. It had stirred his blood even to behold them lying on the bright blue waters of the bay, all so gallantly arrayed, with flags and pennons fluttering in the soft evening air. But to have been on board, to have been spoken to by the prince himself, ah! that indeed was something to think of for many and many a long day.

So quickly had Cristoforo and Giacomo completed their business in the valley, that they had even yet a good hour to spare, and they spent it, not on the beach, but round among the rocks to the eastern side of the city, and in the water itself.

Many and many an hour, either in the company of other boys or all by himself, did Cristoforo while away floating on the water or boldly breasting the billows, so that he became a very expert swimmer indeed. The boy's thoughts while gazing on the ocean—

> "Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
> Glasses itself in tempests"—

might have been similar to the poet's of later years—

> "I have loved thee, Ocean! and my joy
> Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be
> Borne—like thy bubbles, onward. From a boy
> I wantoned with thy breakers—they to me
> Were a delight; and if the freshening sea
> Made them a terror—'twas a pleasing fear;
> For I was, as it were, a child of thee,
> And trusted to thy billows far and near,
> And laid my hand upon thy mane—"

It was not until the sun began to decline in the west, sinking slowly in a flood of glory that lit up all the country far and near, that, seated on the braes of Carignano, Cristoforo told his friend that which indeed had been in his mind

all day to communicate, though till now he had not found a suitable place or time, of his parents consenting to allow him to become a sailor.

"Is it not glorious?" said the enthusiastic boy.

"Yes," said Giacomo thoughtfully.

"But you talk almost doubtingly!"

"Well," said the cautious young merchant, "you see, Cris, if everybody thought as much of the sea as you do, everyone would go to sea, and no one would be left on shore to sell cheeses. But," he added, "I wish you joy. Though I fear you will never, never return."

"Yes, I will; and even when an old man, I shall come back to dear old Genoa and lay me down to die. And it was so good of mother to get my father's consent. Even though in grief for me herself, she did this. Oh, Giacomo, I think there is no mother on earth like mine."

CHAPTER IV.

"LISTEN, LITTLE FRIEND, AND I WILL TELL YOU."

THE boy Cristoforo lived in an age of chivalry, romance, and superstition. Indeed, even the religion of his times was sadly darkened by the mythological, which, however, the clear glad light of science was already beginning to dispel.

Genoa was in itself a city of romance, and its hardy sons furnished the best and the bravest sailors that the world at that time knew, hardly excepting even the English themselves, for undoubtedly much of what we read of in old books concerning the indomitable courage and bravery of Britannia upon the billows must be put down to what

I may call historic license. The writers of old who described battles in which prodigies of valour were performed by the English seamen and prodigies of cowardice by the enemy—French or Spanish—battles in which thousands of the foe were slain, while the killed and wounded on board the English fleet amounted probably only to fifty or a hundred, were permitting their patriotism to swamp their veracity, their love of country to obscure their regard for sacred truth.

Says Hardyng, in a poem descriptive of a battle, in which the English lost but a hundred:

> "And many dryont were that day in the sea,
> That as our fleet there then still alway,
> Unto the feast next of her Nativity,
> The bodies flote among our ships alway.
> Full piteous was and foul to see them aye.
> That thousands—twenty as they them told—
> . . . taken were in that same battle bold."

Well, in a case of this sort a thousand more or less of either prisoners or slain would signify but little to a poet-historian like Hardyng.

Returning into port after a cruise at sea, and a brush with the enemy, the English sailors would have many a wild and terrible story to tell, and the wildness and terribleness of their yarns would naturally enough be in proportion to the powers of deglutition possessed by the enraptured listeners. Genoese caracks sunk or burned by these warlike tars would be magnified into mountains, the men who fought them into fiends incarnate; but caracks, fiends, and all had to fall and sink beneath the onslaught of our little English ships and our little English men—according to these story-tellers.

And we cannot surely blame the Genoese if, on their return to their own romantic town, they also gave loose rein

to their imaginations. And, doubtless, there was much impressive valour displayed on both sides.

Diego, the fisherman-boatman, had often sailed away in these caracks of war, and helped both the Spaniards and the French to fight their foes; and it is not to be wondered at that his terrible tales of the sea and of battles and sieges, and hair-breadth escapes, were listened to with wrapt attention by young Cristoforo Colombo, or that they fired his blood, till he longed for the time when he too should be afloat, and a participator in deeds heroic.

But Diego had other tales to talk of the sea, as well as those that concerned the heroism of the citizen-sailors in east or west, for had not the ocean its folk-lore, its wonders, and its dread mysteries; so, in the winter evenings, when Cristoforo and his little friend Giacomo visited the old sailor in his humble home, even after hearing him speak of battle or of storm, the boys were ever ready to listen to the weird and the unexplainable.

The world at this time, as known, say, to the monks of San Stefano, so many of whom were the friends of Cristoforo, was not a very, very wide one, and there was much about it that they could not explain, eagerly though the boy questioned them. It was surrounded on all sides by a limitless expanse of ocean; but what was in the great beyond they told it was a sin even to think or inquire.

While, therefore, Cristoforo hung entranced upon the legends and mythical stories related by Diego, it is just possible that the very fact of his doing something forbidden by the monks lent those tales an additional charm. This is but human nature; "stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant."

But if Cristoforo thought he was doing wrong by encouraging Diego to tell to him and to his friend stories of the unknown, no doubt he duly confessed afterwards that

he had yielded to the temptation, and was made to do penance, and then forgiven.

Nearly all Diego's tales bore repetition, certainly not night after night, but probably about once a month. And as the sailor was always willing to oblige, the boys were never at a loss for something to think about, after they went home and got to bed.

On beautiful evenings, with the stars or moon reflected back from the smooth bosom of the sea, Cristoforo made Diego talk about nothing else save deeds of heroism, fights at sea, and warfare generally; on darker nights tales of pirates or corsairs formed capital entertainment. But there were other evenings that were not only dark but stormy, when the waves leapt high over the rocks beneath the city, and sang and shrieked through the chinks in Diego's closed shutters like wild wolves howling for their prey, or, as the sailor once phrased it, like the spirits of slain seamen sent back to haunt the streets in which they once had lived. And on evenings like these the boys crept more closely up to Diego's knee as he sat by the fire, and prayed him to relate to them his strangest, weirdest tales of the sea.

Cristoforo would lead gradually up to the best of these. Perhaps he did not like to seem too greedy of the wonderful, all at once. He might commence for instance thus:—

"And of a verity, Diego, there are in the western ocean, and not far off Cape Bajador, as you once told us, fishes that fly in the air like birds? Is it really and truly so, Diego?"

"Of a verity, yes, little friend, for with mine own eyes have I beheld them. They are beautiful creatures, and on moonlight nights, when they leap from the waves, they have the appearance of silver swallows, and the water that falls from their outstretched wings or tails is like unto drops of liquid fire. And by day, too, have I seen them, sometimes in great flocks. They leap from the water and skim through

the air, that they may avoid becoming the prey of a great and ugly fish, with fearful eyes and awful teeth, which follows them. But in flying thus oftentimes do they but court a danger quite as terrible. They avoid Scylla only to court Charybdis, for far up in the blue sky, almost against the very sun itself, wheels round and round a mighty bird, which, on seeing the flying fishes, emits a wild scream of delight, and, darting downwards, seizes them both in beak and in talons, and bears them away."

"And this flying fish, Diego, hath it feathers?"

"No, little friend, no. Its feathers are silver scales."

"And it is a small fish?"

"In size not larger than a herring, but far more lithe and graceful in shape."

"Tell us, Diego, of a fish somewhat bigger."

"In the seas, then, whereon I have sailed, and on which many times and often I have been becalmed, are huge fishes called dolphins. Yet are they of a merry and playful nature, and by night when no wind is blowing, when there are stars in the sea as well as stars in the sky, and when, by reason of the motionless state of the water, it is impossible to tell where ocean ends and ether begins, may those dolphins at times be seen dancing around the becalmed ship, and sailors do affirm, though I myself have never known it, that plaintive music soft and low may be heard stealing up from the bosom of the placid deep; yet may no man hear these sweet sounds more than three times, and live. But, once again, it is said that, on the evening of the day on which the body of a seaman who has thus thrice received warning is dropped into the sea, sad and mournful music is heard gurgling up from the water, as if the spirits that dwell in the fathomless abyss did lament and bewail his fate."

"But you told us once of even huger fishes than these?"

"Yes, of great whales far vaster than any that ever are

seen in the peaceful waters of the Mediterranean. For those I speak of and have myself seen are larger far than many war-galleys, and larger than the largest carack that, manned by brave sailors, ever sailed away to fight the warlike Britons. Very terrible to look at and behold are these fishes, for some have a horn of ivory growing out from their foreheads as great as a good ship's mast, and eyes that emit sparks and fire, and nostrils from which rise smoke as if from a mighty furnace. And these mighty monsters have been known to seize boats in their fearsome jaws and crunch them with their gigantic teeth, while the seamen were tossed into the sky, falling dead therefrom like leaves that are blown from the trees in the forest. Ships, too, have been destroyed by these mighty leviathans, for the strength of their tails is so great that no vessel that ever sailed the salt seas can withstand a blow therefrom."

"And these, of course, are the very largest fishes that are in the mysterious western ocean?"

"Mayhap you are right, little friend; yet is there a creature far more dreadful than any leviathan, and which has often been seen by those mariners who have been blown far away by tempest, and knew not in which direction to steer. But hark, my children, how wild the storm is blowing! Surely on such a night as this it is not good to speak of so awesome a monster?"

"Yes, yes, Diego. Tell us. Have you ever seen the fearful thing?"

"Not I myself, children, but Matteo, with whom I sailed for many years, an old, old young man still living on the island of Sicily, has seen it, and been, alas! too near to it."

"But we are puzzled, Diego. If young, how can he be so very old?"

"Listen, little friend, and I will tell you. It is a strange enough story, and had I not received it from Matteo himself,

I should have doubted its truth. Matteo had been many years at sea sailing under the crimson and orange flag of Spain. He had of late landed at the chief city of Portugal, from off a long cruise in British waters. Much money had he saved, for many ships of the rude and uncultivated swine of Britons had been captured. It pleased Matteo to believe that never could his gold be exhausted, so he danced much and sang much nightly, and much wine did he drink and cause his friends also to imbibe. But lo! he awoke one morning poor even to the extent of having not a real to purchase a dust of flour withal. Nor would the friends he had so lavishly entreated give to him now bite or sup.

"Starving almost he was crawling along the street, when suddenly he came up with a man of uncouth and wild appearance. Something, he knew not what, caused him to follow in the footsteps of this strange man, and lo! he soon found himself on board a bark of large dimensions, and more curious in workmanship than any he had yet seen.

"The uncouth man was coarse in speech; but he gave Matteo food and drink, and he placed money in his hand and asked him to sail with him and his crew, and he would see strange regions of the world into which no vessel had ever yet ventured save his own. He also showed Matteo beautiful pearls, and gems, and gold, and he showed him also curious fruits, that when one did eat of, one felt strangely elated, and would dance and sing as if he had partaken of old wine.

"And the crew of this ship were one and all as uncouth as was the master thereof himself. Nevertheless, being so exceedingly poor, and knowing not whither to turn for food or for drink, Matteo chose to sail in this mysterious ship. He could not help, however, marvelling much that after setting sail, the land sped so speedily from their view, despite the fact that there was hardly a breath of wind any-

where else except in the sails of the vessel itself. Then Matteo began to repent him that he had left the shore. Not so the crew, the farther away the ship sailed, the madder and the merrier did they become. And never for many days did they seem to sleep, neither in the darkness of the starless nights, nor during the fierce heat of the noontide sun. But for ever singing were they, the same weird song, making uncouth gestures with arms and with heads as they did so:—

'Southward speed we, south and away;
Nothing heed we by night or by day.
Good things deride us,
Scorn us and chide us;
But the evil will guide us
South and away.
Then hurry we, scurry we—let us live while we may.
All hail to the wind speeding us southward away!'

"Instead of the happiness he had at first felt in the thoughts that he would return to his own country laden with pearls and gold and much fine treasure, a strange terror now took possession of Matteo's mind, and sleep fled from his couch; or if he did lose himself for a moment in slumber, it was only to be surrounded in his dreams by those same wild sailors making their uncouth gestures and singing their uncouth song.

"One night, after he had gone below, the revelling on deck reached a pitch more boisterous and terrible than he had yet known it, and rushing up he beheld a scene that might have sufficed to turn a man less bold into stone.

"The demon crew of this demon ship—for surely, dear boys, she could have been naught else—had joined hands together and were dancing frantically and with uncouth yells and shoutings around something dark that lay upon the deck. Suddenly this something drew itself up all its

black and slimy length, and Matteo could see that it was a fearful serpent, with a long mane, a tongue that hissed, and fire-flashing eyes. The horrid thing towered high above the crew, and with its wriggling head appeared to guide the motions of the uncouth sailors. Quicker and quicker motioned the serpent, faster and faster round wheeled the crew, till, unable to gaze a moment longer, Matteo's senses reeled, and he fell heavily on the deck. As his eyes closed he minded himself to utter a word or two of prayer, and as he did so a quick flash of lightning lit up the ship, the thunder rolled loudly around him, the sails were rent to pieces by a hurricane wind, the masts toppled and fell, and the ship was engulfed in the midnight sea!

"Matteo remembered no more until he found himself lying high and dry on a rock in the midst of the heaving ocean, which he describes as far more blue than our own Mediterranean ever is even on the longest day in summer. The sky, too, was blue and bright, with never a cloud in it all. Nor was there any bird or fish to be seen, nor any sign of life in the water or in the air. How he came there he never could tell, only the memory of the time he had spent on board that demon ship was like unto the memory of a fearful dream.

"Parched with thirst and scorched with heat all that day he lay upon the rock, unable to move; and he now gave himself up for lost, and prayed that night might bring him surcease of sorrow and freedom from life.

"About sundown he was suddenly aroused by a sound like that of a distant waterfall, and raising himself on his elbow he could see afar off, but coming rapidly towards him, a creature like a vast snake, which was as big round as a barrel of wine and many hundreds of feet long. A huge head, with a fearsome mouth, and a mane like sea-weed behind it, was raised high above the water. On and on it

came, nearer and nearer. He could hear it pant and blow now like a furnace bellows. But it passed him by, nor seemed to see him, being intent only on its journey towards the west."

"Towards the west, Diego?"

"Yes, little friend, it was moving towards the setting sun.

"Next day, my children, a vessel that had been blown off the coast of Africa, near to the lonely Cape Bajador, and had drifted far away to sea, picked up a man whom they found lying half-dead on a rock. His face was wrinkled, his limbs were shrivelled, and his hair and beard as white as the mountain snow.

"That man was Matteo."

"That is indeed a terrible story. But, Diego, do you think it is true?"

"About the demon ship I know not what to say. Mayhap Matteo dreamt it. But how came he on that black rock in the midst of the sea? And how comes he—a man not yet forty—by that wrinkled face, by that snow-white beard and hair, and by the fearsome look which seldom leaves his eyes?

"As to the sea-serpent, that is, no doubt, true enough. For many such there be in the ocean unlimited that lies far far to the west of Spain and Africa.

"Ah! children, the sea hath many, many mysteries, and they are but partially revealed to those whose lives are spent on the waters, and who day after day behold the wonders of God in the bosom of the mighty deep."

CHAPTER V.

"OH, GIACOMO, HOW I LONG TO FOLLOW THE SUN!"

IT must not be thought that our young hero Cristoforo—as for the present I must call him—spent nearly all his time in dreamland, or in listening to the tales of the miraculous and wonderful as told him by Diego or the monks. No; for the lad was not only a hard student, but some portion of almost every day he spent in assisting his father at his work or doing out-door business for him; or he would sit by his mother for hours at a time while she worked at her little silk-loom, often himself relieving her and taking a turn—though it must be confessed he was not an adept at silk-weaving.

Let me say here once and for all, that my reading and studies of the early life of Columbus lead me to the belief that he was in reality a good, a brave, and a manly boy. A biographer oftentimes permits himself to be deceived as to the good qualities of his subject, and to impute to him virtues that he never possessed; just as, to the ardent lover, the mistress of his heart is ever a paragon. But I have to impute no goodness of heart or actions to Columbus; it is there in his character as plain as the weather-cock on yonder steeple, and just as bright and shining. Nor will the meanest of this great man's calumniators attempt to deny that the boy Cristoforo not only paid attention to his studies, but did his duty to his parents and was unselfish in his life, and, moreover, a Christian lad.

"The boy is father of the man." This, I believe, is as true a line as ever was written. Time changes the body, but it cannot really change the mind. Oh, yes, I admit

freely enough that the cares of this world, or the influence of evil companions may seem to eat and corrode the purity of the mind, but it never altogether destroys it; therefore, I say that Columbus, who never exposed himself or was by circumstances exposed to the influence of bad company, could not have grown up into the cruel and selfish man which some of his enemies represent him. My argument, you see, is a very simple one. Christopher was a good boy—not a goody-goody boy, mind you; I for one cannot endure this class of the genus Puer, and look upon them with suspicion;—but a manly boy, a hater of lies and of sneakery, and a lover of nature and the beautiful, *ergo* he became a good man.

But I am willing enough to grant that Columbus was an imaginative boy and a dreamer. He dreamt of great things, however, and though all his dreams did not turn out true, as many of them did as served to revolutionize the whole world; and you and I are reaping the fruits of the mighty mariner's labours at this very hour.

Boys who can read must read something—apart from their studies, I mean. Well, in young Columbus's day there were no pleasant books of travel and adventure to peruse, no *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, no Fenimore Cooper, no G. A. Henty—not even a Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress;* so that Genoese lads had to seek for adventures of their own, over the hills and mountains, in the forests and woodlands, by streamlet and sea. But Cristoforo was a Latin scholar, and he managed to get hold of many books in this language, and in the Italian itself, which taught him to believe that the world was neither shaped and fashioned as most people believed it to be, nor half so limited.

There were many seafarers to whom Cristoforo managed to get an introduction, and some of these had coasted hundreds of leagues along the western shores of Africa, and

had brought many strange specimens of the products of these far-off lands with them, in confirmation of the stories of the wild people and curious animals they had encountered during these daring cruises.

Moreover, not one of these mariners was there who did not believe that the coast-line could be followed far farther south than anyone had yet ventured to sail. And some believed too that it would be possible enough soon to get quite round the shores of Africa, and thus find a new if not a nearer route to far Cathay or the eastern shores of Asia—India it was always called in those days.

Now I am of those who believe that, although it may have been an ambition of Cristoforo's to become a student at the distant University of Pavia, he never did study there; though I doubt not that cosmography in its widest sense was taught at that seminary. But as to actual chart or map making, as well as the rudiments of navigation, Cristoforo learned these at home in Genoa, and more especially in the drawing of charts did he become an adept.

One day, some months before the boy began his career as a sailor, he and Giacomo were down by the beach and close to the sea, where a big wet patch of sand had been left by the receding tide. They had been fishing, but the boat was secured for the night, for it was getting near to sunset. The waves broke lazily on the shore, birds wheeled in air, floated on the gentle swell of the water, or ran nimbly to and fro on the beach on supper intent.

Cristoforo had, with the aid of the long rod which he used in fishing, just drawn a rude plan of the western world, as he knew it, with its seas, its gulfs, its islands, and the great unknown ocean all beyond, and was explaining things to his friend, who was listening very intently—for what boy does not dearly love a picture?

"Now, Giacomo," he was saying, "you have before you

a map of nearly the whole world as now known to us. We are just here,"—he pointed to each spot as he named it—"our fair city lies there; then far away south and to the east here, if we had gone coasting along with those beautiful war-galleys, we should pass Pisa and Rome and come at last to Neapolis. How I long to see that city, Giacomo! If we still went southwards and east we should come to many more islands, and finally get into a wider sea, which would land us on the western shores of India; and much of this is a Terra Incognita.[1] You see I have not sketched it, though some day I shall. The west has more interest for me. Night after night in the sweet summer time the sun sets in a glory of colour in the west that dazzles our poor eyes—then all the horizon is painted with gold. Oh, Giacomo, how I long to follow the sun, for I have dreamt that it but sets here to rise in lands more lovely far than these!

"But note, Giacomo, that I have sketched you here in our own sea two large islands. They are Corsica and Sardinia. Of these, good Diego has given us both much information. Some day I shall see for myself whether it be perfectly correct or not.

"Now southward here lies a great unknown land, round the northern and western shores of which, though many ships have sailed, no one has ever penetrated into its interior, it being a land of wild beasts and wilder men.

"But pass we through the Gates of Hercules here, where frown great rocks above the sea, and we find ourselves at once in the Mare Incognitum, the great unknown ocean, that stretches away into sunset, but whither no one can tell. Coast we northwards now, and we pass Spain and Portugal and even fair France, and get into the midst of the islands of the Britons, against which our noble war caracks have

[1] Unknown Land.

done so much execution, slaying their thousands and sinking the huge ships of these uncultured Anglians. If northward still we sail, we come into the frozen regions beyond Norvega and Dasia, lands whose ships have ere now conquered the northern world. These strange countries, Giacomo, it may yet be my good fortune to explore. But if, when passing the Pillars of Hercules we put our helm to port, then we shall coast away down the western shores of the little-known land, till passing the burning regions of the equator, we reach a point of this great Terra Incognita beyond which navigators have never yet dared to sail."

"And these little islands, Cristoforo," said his companion, "that you have placed far down in your map, but westward still, what are they?"

"The first few of these are the Fortunate Islands, the Islands of the Blest. Diego has mentioned these. Some day, Giacomo, I shall be able to tell you more about them.

"But see here, Giacomo, far far west I have placed the Isles of Antilia, and Brazil. Who knows if anyone has ever yet visited these islands, although many are the tales the monks have told me concerning them; but they admit that all is but fable and romance.

"Now, Giacomo, what think you of my map? It is crude and it is rude, my friend; and by and by the waves will rise and wash it all away, but the waves themselves can never wash away the plan of the world I have in my mind."

"Good, my little lad, good!" said a voice behind the boys.

They looked hastily up, to meet the kindly face of a man of imposing mein, in whose dark hair a sprinkling of gray seemed to have come all too early, for his face was fresh and young, and he smiled most pleasantly.

"Oh," he continued, "I have been standing here quite a long time listening."

Cristoforo turned red.

"Nothing to be ashamed of, little lad. But come with me—both of you if so minded—and I will show you a better map than even this of yours, and certainly a far more permanent one."

"I think, master," said Cristoforo with some hesitation, "I have seen you often before."

"Very likely, boy, I am often by the sea; my name is Grazioso Benincasa, and I labour as a humble draughtsman here in your beautiful city of Genoa."

"Yes, I know you now. Oh, I am so glad we have met; I have often longed to know you. Mother is right. God is very good to me. I am going to be a sailor soon. Diego has already taught me much. But if you will but let me question you sometimes, I shall soon know more of the world."

"You shall ask me what you please, and I will answer you if I can. Moreover, you shall see my charts, and copy them all if you choose."

Cristoforo stayed for a whole hour with Grazioso, and when he returned home that evening he was more joyfully excited than ever his mother had seen him.

For some months the boy's studies now took a new turn, and he came to spend hours every day in the rooms of Grazioso the cosmographer.

There was little change in his mode of life otherwise, although it has been averred that he now grew somewhat more grave as the time drew near for his leaving home and adopting a life on the ocean wave. This is probably true enough, for what boy does not feel a little sad at the thoughts of leaving his dear old home and all its simple joys, leaving his very youth behind, to embark on the sea of life in the profession which he has chosen?

But his daily commune with the cosmographer Grazioso may have caused him to become somewhat grave and

thoughtful, for the more one knows of this world and its wonders and mysteries, the more one's own littleness is felt, and the more one is impressed with the truth that we human beings are but infinitesimal units of the great creation we see but a portion of everywhere around us.

. . . . . .

Cristoforo Colombo has gone to sea. He is now about fourteen years of age, just the time all boys should join their ships for service, if they wish to grow up thorough seamen, if they would know and love the mighty ocean and understand it, if they would know and love ships. Sea life is so entirely distinct from that on shore, that no one can ever become thoroughly enamoured with it who does not spend his early years buffeting the brine and the breeze. It is when a boy is in his teens that he is most impressionable, and though Mother Ocean appears often to be a rough parent, she is kindly nevertheless, and one soon learns to sympathize with her in all her moods.

On this same year of fourteen hundred and sixty-one, when Cristoforo first commenced a series of voyages which, whatever else they taught him, made him a thorough and fearless sailor — exciting scenes were taking place in the streets of Genoa. The doge, Prospero Adorno, had got tired of French protection, which he found meant French rule, French bombast, ay and robbery,—for if any favours were granted to Genoa and the Republic generally by fair France, they, the Genoese, had to work hard and pay deep and dearly for them; so that protection and oppression began at last to be considered very much the same thing. A quarrel occurred on the streets, in which one or two citizens were killed and wounded by Frenchmen, and this caused the people to rise *en masse*. The scenes of riot and bloodshed that now occurred are too sickening to depict graphically, but it was for a time a war of races, in which many of the

French were slain in the street and their bodies left to swelter in the gutter, while their houses were burned or sacked. Finally, what remained of the miserable Frenchmen sought refuge in the fort of Castaletto, and even this was captured in the following year.

That France should seek for revenge, or what she termed justice, was not to be wondered at. But the bold doge succeeded in repelling the invasion, and the enemy had to retreat baffled. So things continued in a state of agitation and ferment until, in fourteen hundred and sixty-four, an alliance was formed with the Duchy of Milan, and trade began once more to flourish.

Things had not turned out so badly with Cristoforo after all, and neither his father nor his mother repented, when the troublesome times came, that their son was at sea. He was an impulsive boy, and had he been at home, young though he was, he would no doubt have got mixed up, one way or another, with the street fighting and probably been killed.

Cristoforo's first cruises were chiefly in the ships of sturdy merchantmen, and were not as a rule of very long duration. So that the ties which bound him to his native city and his dear little home beyond the walls, were not rudely snapped nor sundered all at once.

Not only were the voyages short, but he had long spells of life on shore, during which times, although he still continued his studies, and indeed was a harder reader than ever — though he always kept up his friendship with Grazioso, with the monks, and with his friend Giacomo—he did not disdain to assist his father with his work.

Domenico the weaver, who had always been most industrious, found himself thriving now, and fain would both he and Cristoforo's mother have had their son give up his wild life at sea and settle down with them on shore.

"Dear son," his mother would often say to him, "do you

not think that you have now had enough of life on the ocean? Could you not now become your father's companion and mine, Cristoforo?"

There would be a pleading tone in the mother's voice at such times that went straight home to the boy's heart.

"Dear mother," he would reply, "do not tempt me, pray. Something calls me to sea. I hear the voice now as loudly as ever I heard it. I have a plan, mother mine, by which I shall acquire wealth and honour too, not for myself alone, not alone for you, but for the world, mother, the whole world.

"But do not think," he would add, "that I am going to desert you. My plans are not ripe yet. Though I am nearly a man, and almost fit to command a ship, I shall wait. Life is all before me, and I desire to see you settled in a better home than this poor abode ere I finally leave."

"And yet, Cristoforo, we have been very happy here."

"Ah, mother mine, yes, but you are working too hard. Why, dear mother, there are already wrinkles gathering around your eyes."

. . . . . .

The adventures of Cristoforo during his first ten years at sea would fill a goodly volume. Where, it may be asked, is there any account of these adventures? Reader, a great naturalist, now but lately gone from amongst us, was once presented with a large and curious bone which had been dug up in the wilds of Australia. This naturalist set himself to study that bone. He was not long in discovering that it had belonged to a bird, nor very long in giving a description of what he considered the bird had been like. It was extinct, of course, but he said it must have been larger far than the African ostrich, and of somewhat the same nature. Years went by and at last a complete skeleton of the extinct bird was found, which proved beyond doubt that the naturalist's theory was, in almost every particular, true to

nature. There had been those who had pooh-poohed his theory and called him a dreamer and a "crank." They were silenced now.

In the same way it would not be difficult for a student of sea-life in the days of the young Cristoforo to build up, from the few facts at his command, a complete history of the life of Columbus while yet in his teens, and this story would certainly not be a long way from the truth.

Well, our hero's early life at sea was really one of considerable hardship, and the boy had many hard struggles and not a few rebuffs, for not only was he required to keep watch and assist in all the arduous duties of a seafarer, but keep up his studies and fit and prepare himself to navigate and to command. He was seldom long on board any vessel—and at first these were chiefly traders—before the master thereof found out his good qualities, his sincerity, his truthfulness, and his perseverance.

Had it been all plain sailing with Columbus in these first years probably he never would have been taught this last quality in such a high degree. Perseverance is a hardy plant. Place it in a congenial soil and it grows as grows the heather on our Highland hills, and the more it is buffeted by the winds and storms of adversity, the harder and harder does it become, and the more determined is it to fulfil its mission in nature.

CHAPTER VI.

WITH BOLD JOHN OF ANJOU.

THE old Latin proverb, "*Fortuna favet fortibus*, owes more of its attractiveness probably to alliteration's artful aid than to truth. Fortune does not always favour the brave,

although it spurns the idle man and utterly ignores the coward.

John of Anjou, the Duke of Calabria, was a brave and a daring fellow. So was our own Scotch Prince Charlie, surnamed the Bonnie. Each of these sought to recover a kingdom for his father. Right was upon the side of each. Both fought like lions, but alas! both failed.

The so-called "rebellion" of —45 in last century, which was extinguished on the fatal field of Culloden, is well known to every boy who has read anything of the history of this great kingdom. Not so, perhaps, the "rebellion"—again a misnomer—of the Duke of Calabria. John's father was King René, Count of Provence, and the throne of Naples was his by right.

John determined to make a gallant effort to recover the kingdom, and an enterprise of this kind was just such an one as fully commended itself to thousands of adventurers of all sorts, in those dashing days of chivalry and romance. Bold John of Anjou seems to me to have said to himself or sung to himself words akin to the song of the modern Jingoes; and a piece of wretched doggerel it is:

> "We don't want to fight,
> But, by Jingo, if we do,
> We've got the ships, we've got the men,
> And we've got the money too."

Nothing was wanting to John. All sorts of people and all sorts of sailing craft for love, for chivalry, for fun, for fighting, or in the hopes of winning a little money, came flocking and floating to his standard from all quarters of the Levant. Now Cristoforo had a relative who was an admiral. I am not quite certain in what particular service he ought to have written himself down as admiral. I am pretty sure, however, that he was not one whit particular

as to whose or in what service it was, so long as there was plenty of rough-and-tumble work and fighting attached to it, with a fair amount of gold to be gained thereby. If a sailor in those times had dash and courage, knew how to sail a ship, and command a crew of fearless cut-throats, it was easy enough to become an admiral.

Hear how Washington Irving speaks of sea-life in the early years of Columbus's career:—

"The seafaring life of the Mediterranean in those days was hazardous and daring. A commercial expedition resembled a warlike cruise, and the maritime merchant had often to fight his way from port to port. Piracy was almost legalized. The frequent feuds between the Italian States, the cruisings of the Catalonians, the Armadas fitted out by private noblemen, who exercised a kind of sovereignty in their own domains and kept armies and navies in their pay; the roving ships and squadrons of private adventurers—a kind of naval Condottieri sometimes employed by hostile governments, sometimes scouring the seas in search of lawless booty; these, with the Holy Wars waged against the Mohammedan powers, rendered the narrow seas, to which navigation was principally confined, scenes of hardy encounters and trying reverses. Such was the rugged school in which Columbus was reared."

Well, this Admiral Colombo, relative of our hero, owned war-galleys of his own, and it was not long before he made John of Anjou an offer of his sword and services, which, it is almost needless to add, were cheerfully accepted.

When, during the course of the four years' struggle, Cristoforo went to visit and pay his respects to his relative, and was offered a commission, let us call it, under the admiral, it is no wonder he gladly accepted it. The lad was then a dashing young fellow of seventeen, hardened by the sea-service he had already seen, and bronzed or at least

reddened by the blazing suns of several summers, as well as by the fierce winds that blow along these coasts in winter.

To have command of a beautiful swift-rowed galley, to have officers under him, to walk his own quarter-deck, to be literally king of his own castle—for these war-galleys, you will remember, had a castle amidships—to have from fifty to a hundred gunsmen and spearmen under him, ready at a word from him to board and fight any vessel they came across, and win for him honour and renown, was indeed a change for Cristoforo.

Hitherto he had been holding but a very junior position in the mercantile marine, subject to hardships innumerable —bad accommodation on board, bad food and water, and exposure to storms, for these merchant vessels often sailed a long distance off the land, that they might the better avoid being boarded and captured by pirates, and constantly on the alert for a possible enemy.

But now all this was altered. The galley he commanded was one of the corsair admiral's fleetest and best.

"I like you, lad," his relative had told him. "You may not have a deal of experience, but that will come. I can trust you. You have a drop of the genuine old sea-king blood in you, and if you keep on as you are going, you will be an honour to our family yet, and perhaps, like myself and my son, a terror to the seas."

Mind you, Cristoforo had not the slightest desire to become a "terror." He objected to pirating on principle, but the cause in which he was now to wave a sword was a good and a legitimate one.

"I am going to put you on special service, Cristo," continued the admiral. "Instead of remaining with the fleet, you will hang on our flanks or remain far astern. Hawk-like you must hover along the green shores of Italy, though dashing occasionally across to Corsica or Sardinia, and you

must board or examine every vessel you meet, and sink or burn every Neapolitan craft that does not fly the pennon of bold John of Anjou. Go, lad, and may our Lady bless and prosper your arms."

Young Cristoforo's exceeding eagerness to do the right thing led him into many a danger, but his good luck and "go" carried him successfully through. His men adored him. They were all young or under thirty, and full of fight and fire, and never so near being perfectly happy as when rushing onwards to attack a vessel twice as big as their own.

The galley was then a sight to see. Imagine an action like the following:—

The *Vendetta*—Cristoforo's galley—had lain at anchor all night in a little wooded bay on the Corsican shore. It was summer time; yet the men had been buffeted by high winds and heavy seas on the previous day, and like a good general Cristoforo knew they needed rest and sleep to restore their spirits. The wind, however, had gone down entirely towards nightfall, and, save the occasional cry of a night-bird or the monotonous boom of the breaking waves, there was not a disturbing sound till up over the eastern sea rose the glad bright sun.

Fresh fruit and eggs and flesh were had from peasants who had come off in boats long before dawn, and the men and officers enjoyed their early breakfast as only hungry corsairs can.

Then just as the sun had thrown off the roseate blush of morning and shone like a disc of burnished silver over the waves, and just as sounds of life were awakening in woods and on mountains, the oars were raised, and with them the young captain's arm. The arm fell, the oars fell with a plash; there was a suppressed cheer and the galley darted off.

Soon the headland is rounded, and now she is out and

away along the beautiful and romantic coast. But hardly has she rowed a league ere there is a shout from the outlook above the battery in the bows—"A sail in sight!"

Yes, and a lordly-looking craft she is, and to all appearance Neapolitan. A few cat's-paws ruffle the water; the galley rises and falls on the long rolling swell; the suspicious ship hoists more sail and stands seaward before the light wind. But now are the rowers in the galley on their mettle. It will be a race for life, it will be a fight to the death.

On sails the ship. She too has got great oars out to help her. But despite all her efforts the *Vendetta* comes up hand-over-hand. The chase has hoisted a flag in proud defiance. She means to fight. Prettily streams out the *Vendetta's* pennon on the morning air. The oarsmen, who are stripped to the waist, strain every nerve; the muscles on their arms and chest stand out like knotted ropes beneath the skin; their faces are red, and corded with starting veins; there is determination in every glance; the very sound of the great oars in the rowlocks is a steady and determined one. Meanwhile, the archers in the bows are ready, and there are men with fire-pots there too; and on the outrigged deck, grim and resolute, the spearmen crouch ready to spring.

A puff of smoke, then another from the chase. Lombards have been fired, but the shots fall wide and sink in the sea. And now sails are trimmed, the ship will fight!

There is a steady man at the helm of the *Vendetta*, Cristoforo guides him. Cristoforo is on the bridge, or raised deck amidships, now forward, now aft, directing, commanding, and encouraging all.

More shots from the merchantman. They do not even confuse those on board the galley, and only one man falls. But now oars are laid fore and aft on the *Vendetta's* star-

board side, and next moment, just as a volley of bolts are fired from the battery, she is close alongside the merchantman's port side.

Hark to that shout! Cristoforo's men, he himself at their head, hardly pause to point their spears. They clamber on board, and now the fight is hand-to-hand, ferocious, terrible, desperate. The chase's men fight well, but backward they are borne, the deck littered with dead and dying, till they reach the poop, and then—it is all over.

The wounded, I am sorry to say, receive but scant quarter, and though Cristoforo tries to stay the hand of vengeance, he tries in vain.

This is a wealthy prize. Fain would Cristoforo have taken her body-bulk, but the exigencies of war forbid. Her guns are transferred, however, to the *Vendetta*, much of her stores, and all her gold.

A few minutes more and the *Vendetta* is lying on her oars nearly a quarter of a mile off, and red against the blue of the sea the prize is fiercely burning, while a long serpent of gray smoke trails far over the waters to leeward. Sails are licked up by the fire, yard-arms blaze and come down in a shower of sparks, masts topple and fall, the grim hulk totters hither and thither. Finally her decks blow up, then high in air rises her forecastle, and down she sinks stern-foremost in the seething sea.

Now a shout goes up from the galley's men, and a song is raised as the oars strike the water once again, and the *Vendetta* moves merrily on.

. . . . . .

This warlike cruise of Cristoforo's all throughout the summer was like one long ocean picnic.

So pleased was Admiral Colombo with his young relative that he recommended him personally to John of Anjou, and much to his satisfaction our hero was commissioned to

an enterprise that required even greater daring than any he had yet undertaken. And entailed a greater amount of hardship as well, for the duke's fortunes being at this time at a somewhat low ebb, it might have gone ill with him had not the bay of Naples been practically blockaded by Colombo's little fleet of galleys. They seemed to be ubiquitous these bold cruisers, and no amount of cunning on the part of the Neapolitans could enable them to run the blockade. And bravest of all was the *Vendetta*.

One adventure of our hero's is worthy of mention, as it serves to illustrate his character for intrepidity and perseverance.

We have already seen how well and bravely Cristoforo's fellows could fight. Their courage during this expedition was so highly appreciated that either the duke, or his father King René, trusted the *Vendetta's* men to carry many a hazardous undertaking that one would think might better have been trusted to a commander of greater experience than young Cristoforo.

Such a one, for instance, as the cutting out of a Neapolitan galley from the bay or harbour of Tunis in Africa. As this, however, entailed a far longer voyage than the *Vendetta*, which was at the most but a huge war-canoe, could accomplish in safety, Cristoforo was allowed to choose not only a good carack but his own men. Those of the galley volunteered in a body, and others that had been in the ship before made up the full complement. All went well until the vessel was boarded by the captain of a friendly trading ship just off the island of San Pedro in Sardinia. The merchantman had only recently come from the bay of Tunis, and the news he brought was somewhat disheartening. Not only, he said, was the warlike galley there, but two ships besides a carack were with her, and to attempt, therefore, to cut her out would be very like leading a forlorn hope.

Still Cristoforo held on his course, though from the countenances of his officers and crew he could note how very hopeless they considered the case.

The night began to close in dark and somewhat stormy, the wind blowing wildly from the north-west. The unsettled state of the weather further discouraged all hands, and although nothing happened that could be called open mutiny, still a body of the men boldly paid a visit to Cristoforo in his poop-cabin.

"You know, captain," said the spokesman, "how dearly we all love you, and how bravely your old men of the *Vendetta* have ever fought for you; but now we have to confess that the odds against us are fearful. We have wives and little ones at home; bid us not, therefore, throw away our lives on this rash enterprise, but return for the assistance of but one other ship or carack, so shall our success be ensured."

"Well spoken and bravely," said Columbus. "To please you, then, I shall alter the course."

In a few minutes the order was received to put the ship about. Cristoforo himself took the helm for a short time, and in doing so he altered the compass a considerable number of points. Again and again within the hour did he do the same thing. He thus got gradually back to the old course, and as the wind continued to blow high, he made a splendid run, and before daybreak was well across the Levant. When land was sighted, he called his men and officers together, and told them what he had done and what he was determined further to do.

The brief speech he made was received with a cheer by all his old hands, though others showed their discontent by silence or murmurings.

There was no attempt at mutiny, however, and by midday the great carack was steering right into the bay to tackle the foe, and to do or to die.

To Cristoforo's joy, he found that the galley, whose name was *Fernandina*, had taken refuge inside the harbour from the storm of the preceding night, and that only one vessel —a war-ship—was riding at anchor, and probably making preparations to sail.

Cristoforo had now recourse to a little stratagem. He caused most of his men to lie down. He hid the guns, and hoisted the colours of Naples.

The enemy was thus taken off their guard, and made signals which Cristoforo did not understand. But he crowded all sail, and bore down upon the ship with such a rush and so speedily that almost before the foemen had made ready to defend themselves—having now discovered the ruse—the two vessels clashed together, and were quickly in grapples.

The fight did not last above fifteen minutes, but was very fierce the while.

To save themselves from the vengeance of Cristoforo's men, most of the crew that were not wounded leapt overboard into the sea, and commenced swimming towards the shore.

There was no time to lose now, for even already the *Fernandina* was under weigh, and rushing out towards the scene of conflict. So the prize was fired both under the poop and forecastle, and hardly had Cristoforo's vessel got clear away ere she was sheeted in flames not only fore and aft but amidships.

Not much sail was hoisted on the victor. She bore slowly away seawards, looking as though much crippled and as if her fighting strength was greatly reduced, seeing which a shout of triumph arose from the men in the pursuing galley.

As she gained on the carack more sail was hoisted on the latter, and the *Fernandina* was thus gradually lured farther out to sea and to her doom.

Meanwhile preparations were being quickly made on board Cristoforo's vessel to give the galley a very warlike and a very warm welcome indeed.

In this action Cristoforo, young though he was, showed that he possessed all the qualities of a really good admiral. He knew well what this galley was, and what her men could do. She was manned by a crew quite as bold, if not so reckless, as his own. She had proved ere now that she could fight, and burn, and capture. Indeed the *Fernandina* had been for many months a species of *Alabama* in the Mediterranean. She had been here and there and everywhere, and somehow always turned up when least expected. She had sunk many of John of Anjou's craft, and it had become absolutely necessary that she should be destroyed at all hazards.

Both vessels were now well out in the bay, where there was no chance of the galley's receiving assistance from the harbour—if, indeed, there were any craft there to help her. A long rolling swell was coming in from the north-west, making things anything but agreeable for the brave hearts on board the *Fernandina*, and Cristoforo could see the commander as he walked excitedly along his raised deck fore and aft. A tall and handsome man he was, dressed like a stage hero, so many colours had his uniform.

Cristoforo now gave orders to trim sail. The carack was then put about with considerable celerity, a movement which seemed quite to puzzle the *Fernandina*, for her crew were seen resting on their oars for a time. But they were not left long in doubt, for, like a sea-eagle on his prey, down swooped the carack as if she would strike the galley amidships and sink her body-bulk.

If such had been Cristoforo's intention it was cleverly frustrated by the galley.

The fight that followed was fierce, though cleverly entered

into on both sides. Cristoforo's guns were but small, and he could only fire one or two ere the *Fernandina* had come round and swept alongside on the starboard beam. Fire and smoke balls were thrown into the galley with no effect. A volley of hand-grenades and iron did little or nothing to stop the progress of the galley's boarders. So the battle was resolved into one of the olden sort, man to man and spear to spear.

Though far inferior in numbers the galley's men fought like furies. Twice were they repulsed with wounds and slaughter, but on they came again with redoubled vigour, and with shouts and yells that frightened the very sea-birds. In this charge the commander of the galley himself led his men, sword in hand.

For a few minutes the battle raged along the bulwarks. Then Cristoforo saw his men being driven back, and next moment the furies from the *Fernandina* were on board.

But Cristoforo rallies his men, and the fight is soon raging its hottest. There is no shouting now, the work is far too serious, but the clashing of arms is heard, with the thudding sounds of awful blows, the breaking of spears, the rustling and tussling of men in grips, the sound of falls, the groan, the yell of agony, the occasional cry of a victor—all mingling in a confused and fearful medley.

Cristoforo has almost reached the part of the deck on which the *Fernandina's* captain is engaged, but at that instant a spear pierces the neck of the latter, and he falls never again to rise.

The fall of their leader in the fight momentarily demoralizes the boarders. The carack's people take advantage. There is a wild shout of victory now, and for many minutes the battle rages more terrifically than ever.

But it is over at last. The few boarders that remain are beaten back into the galley, but are unable to get her clear.

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COLUMBUS REPELS THE BOARDERS FROM THE GALLEY

She has been grappled in time, and Cristoforo's victory is complete.

So ends as spirited an engagement as any that had occurred during the four-years' war, which, however, despite all the boldest efforts of John of Anjou, ended in defeat and disaster.

And so the curtain drops on the first campaign of Cristoforo Colombo.

CHAPTER VII.

"LIKE A VERITABLE LIGHT FROM HEAVEN."

IN reading lives of Christopher Columbus, one hardly knows which to admire the more—his intrepidity or his steady perseverance. That this mariner of old possessed genius of a high character is a fact that none would venture to dispute, but he also cultivated a gift—without which an investigator of nature is of no more use in his day and generation than a general of a campaign would be who, having plenty of bravery, lacked skill—namely, the gift of painstaking.

How many and many a weary year did such men, for instance, as Darwin work and wait for the elucidation of a single great fact. They took nothing for granted, and never committed themselves to an opinion on any question, that they had not first and foremost studied on every side and from every point of view, probably changing their views many times and oft, and even contradicting themselves during the progress of the investigation.

And so with Columbus. His first thought-germ was tested and tried and studied well and carefully before he even permitted it to take root in his own mind, far less

influence the thoughts of others. Even after it became a sturdy plant, and there was every prospect of its bearing fruit, he was in no foolish hurry to see it even blossom. He kept on studying and studying by land and at sea, sifting and sifting in order to get the grains of truth free from the bushels of chaff that hid them. He hugged his schemes—of the discovery of other countries, and of a new route to India by sailing west-away round the world—to his heart of hearts.

He thought no work too hard that tended to prove his theories either right or wrong, and no time too long if spent in investigating sciences that tended to throw light thereon. The greater part of each year was now spent at sea, and as far as the known world went in those days he managed to visit every portion of it from east to west, from south to north, to which the winds of heaven could bear his ship.

Nor did he hesitate to consult with mariners of every grade, and to encourage them to tell him of all they had seen as well as all they believed and thought, for the master mind of Columbus had no difficulty in separating myth from fact, and truth from mere tradition.

On the other hand, our hero, who was an excellent sailor, and had already proved himself a most heroic commander, managed his voyages in such a way that each of them tended to increase his knowledge of the world, and advance him a step or two in the science of cosmography.

Kindly remember—because to do so helps us to understand the true character of Columbus as well as the true nature of his pet ambition—that our hero might have earned wealth as a merchant navigator pure and simple. Had he become a trader of this sort, and content to make the Mediterranean his cruising ground, he might have commanded a finer fleet of merchantmen than ever sailed from Genoa, and well enough armed to defend themselves against

any force of pirates likely to waylay them. Columbus did not despise riches; he would willingly have become wealthy if only for the sake of his hard-working mother and father, and his brothers and little sister, who had of late come to the world—baby Blanchineta.

But making riches as a trading commander would not further his plans of discovering that new route round the world to India.

Had he desired a wild life of pleasure, combined with the chances of becoming rich or having his throat cut, that species of existence could have been his. The son of the Admiral Colombo was ruffling it on the high seas to a fine tune. He was a bold corsair, fighting in every cause in which a sword could be drawn, and even carrying war into the country of the infidel. Nor was this daring fellow a bit averse to boarding and capturing merchant ships, or doing any deed that a free-lance of those days dare do, so long as there was the chance of gain attached to it.

Had Columbus but said the word, his kinsmen would have been only too pleased to have his company always, and would have spared no pains in putting him up to the piratical ropes. But this life would not have suited Columbus. His religious training forbade, and it would have hindered rather than helped the objects in life he had for ever in view. And though he did take a cruise or two with Colombo the younger, it was undoubtedly more in the pursuit of knowledge than from any inherent love of wild adventure.

Now, if we can take for granted the accounts given by Fernando, the son of Columbus, we should be led to believe that it was during the time that our hero was fighting and ruffling under the banner of Colombo the younger, as he was called, that he first visited Portugal. But a study of dates leads us to suppose that he had been in this country years before. However, controversy is to be avoided in story-

telling, and we must admit that if the first landing of Cristoforo on Portuguese shores happened in the way Fernando tells us, it was a very romantic one indeed.

Colombo the younger, ever on the alert for a fight if it were possible to turn an honest or dishonest penny thereby, got word that four galleys were on their way back to Venice from Flanders, laden to the rowlocks with a rich cargo, and determined to capture them. Colombo sighted his quarry between Lisbon and Cape St. Vincent, and went for them in good old sailor-fashion. The battle was a very ferocious one, for the galleys grappled each other, and the men, we are told, fought man to man. With varying fortunes the fight raged from morn till nearly sundown, Cristoforo's craft being engaged with one of the largest of the Venetian galleys.

In the conflict both vessels were boarded by an enemy that knew no distinction, and which speedily put an end to the fight—fire. The scene was now a very dreadful one indeed, for though the flames originated on board of the Venetian galley, it was found impossible to get the carack clear. All who could leapt into the sea. It was a choice of deaths. But, alas! the wounded were left on board, and their terrible cries could be heard by Cristoforo long after he had swum away from the side of the burning ship and was heading for the distant shore. But these ceased at length, and galley and carack sank together, the last smoke from their burning hulls floating away and disappearing on the evening breeze.

It was a long swim, nearly six miles, that Cristoforo had, and he was almost exhausted when he reached the coast at last. Exhausted and penniless, he was thrown on the beach. Yet among the crowd who had gathered on the lonely shore to witness what they could of the furious fight that raged so long in the offing, Cristoforo found more than one friend,

and a few days after this he reached Lisbon, and at once set himself to seek for work congenial to his tastes.

This he soon found in the office of a cosmographer, and for a time after this he devoted himself to study and teaching.

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For many years after this Christopher Columbus became to a great extent a native of Portugal. He was now a man of about eight-and-twenty, tall and handsome, and of somewhat distinguished mien. His habits of life were studious, but he was temperate in both eating and drinking, and in dress a gentleman, which I take to mean that the clothes he wore were modest and unassuming. He was, moreover, of kindly disposition towards strangers, and ever willing to enter into conversation affably enough, seeming always as anxious to gain information as to give it.

It was not Christopher Columbus's intention to settle down, however. Quite the reverse. And he made more than one voyage along the shores of Africa in command of trading vessels, though in reality with the view of extending his knowledge of the world.

It was with this purpose too that he undertook a voyage towards the icy regions of the north. He sailed in February, probably about the wildest and worst month he could have chosen to cross the northern ocean, for at that season of the year this sea is extremely tempestuous, as I know from experience, and the day is exceedingly short. Nevertheless, he seems to have penetrated as far as Iceland, probably reaching only its southern shores, as he speaks of having encountered no ice.

From Greenland it is said that hardy Norsemen had sailed centuries before on voyages of discovery to the south and the west, and that they had arrived at islands that were fringed with trees and covered with wild-flowers. If

Columbus ever heard of anything of this kind he must have treated it as a traveller's tale and thought no more about it.

But now we come to an event in the life of our hero that, if anything could do so, might easily have caused him to settle down for life in Lisbon or in some part of Portugal. He had now been about three years in his adopted country, and was loved, honoured, and respected by all who knew him. His character, not only as a scholar, but as a devout Christian, was well known.

It was at the chapel connected with the Convent of All Saints where Columbus first met Doña Felipa, the daughter of a deceased Italian, who had been governor of the little island of Porto Santo, near Madeira. It was the old, old story—love at first sight.

"Who ever loved that loved not at first sight?"

Thus writes Marlowe.

Felipa had a mother living, and after the young couple were married they resided with this lady. His wife had no fortune, but the mother had something that Columbus thought of far more value than gold—namely, all the logs and charts of her late husband. Here, indeed, was treasure, and in his subsequent voyages south, as far as the coast of Guinea, on the western shores of Africa, our hero was not slow in turning it to good account.

The spot where Columbus and his bride spent, not one honeymoon, but a dozen at least, was certainly well suited for one like him, who was partly sailor, partly student. It was the little island of Porto Santo mentioned above, and governed at that time, I believe, by a brother-in-law of Columbus's wife. Genealogy is my pet aversion, else would I give the reader all the pedigree of Felipa. Suffice it to say that she was good, and beautiful, and of noble birth.

Porto Santo is a small island, not more than fifteen miles in circumference, that lies some distance off Madeira. A Portuguese fleet was blown there once in a storm. At that time it was quite uninhabited, except, perhaps, by wild pigs and rabbits. But it was speedily colonized by the discoverers, who in those days, and for a century or two afterwards, were the greatest colonists of the age.

On this charming green gem of an island, lying like a little fairyland in the midst of the blue summer sea, the first year of Columbus's married life must have passed away like a long and happy dream. Here, too, his wife presented him with their first child, who was named Diego.

At this period of his life the brother-in-law, Pedro Correo, was Christopher's friend and daily companion. He, too, was a distinguished sailor, and it was to him, while the two sat together in the starlight in the garden of the villa, that our hero laid open his whole mind and confessed his burning ambition to discover a newer route to India than that which Prince Henry had failed to find round the Cape of Good Hope. This prince had died more than a dozen years before the arrival of Columbus in Portugal, yet during his lifetime he had been indefatigable in his search after geographical knowledge. Ship after ship had been despatched southwards along the African coast, which had been explored for a distance of over a hundred miles beyond the equator. The Canary Islands had been discovered, and in 1460 A.D. a Genoese captain fell in with the Cape de Verde Islands.

It is an undoubted fact that the life and doings of this Prince Henry had considerable influence of a stimulating character on the enterprise of our hero.

Probably to no one during the whole course of his life had Christopher ever spoken his mind more freely or openly than to his friend Pedro Correo, the ex-governor of Porto

Santo, during his stay there. Pedro was a quiet and thoughtful man, and one who seemed to invite confidence; and his opinion as a navigator of considerable experience had great weight with Columbus.

Many a night did these two sailors sit poring over their charts and talking till far into the hours of morning.

Not always alone either. There was a ship's captain of the name of Leone, who lived in Madeira, but was for some time at Porto Santo, and used to drop in of an evening. His ideas, however, were far from being as advanced as those of his companions.

"How sorry I am," said Christopher one still and beautiful evening as the trio sat in the verandah enjoying the cool breeze that stole off the sea—"how sorry I am, Pedro, that Prince Henry is not alive now. What a man he would be to know!"

"Yes, indeed," was the reply; "he was truly an excellent fellow. When a mere boy I have seen and heard him talk."

"A man of ambition!"

"A man who dearly loved his country, and appeared to have but one desire—namely, that of extending the empire."

"His story," said Leone, putting his oar in, "was a somewhat romantic one, was it not?"

"So far as that of a soldier and student may be called romantic it certainly was, Leone. He was the son of our John the First, called John the Avenger. His mother was Philippa of Lancaster, sister to Henry the Fourth of England. As a young man he followed his father's fortunes in Africa, the king having carried war into the country of the Moors. But what interested the prince far more than fighting the Moors was the conversation of travellers whose acquaintance he had made at Ceuta. Those men had not only penetrated, themselves, far into the interior of Africa, but were personally known to navigators who had coasted far south of the

equator; and the stories they told of the wealth and the wonders of that portion of the African seaboard were sufficient to fire the blood of one so ardent and hopeful as Prince Henry. Here indeed, he thought, was an opening for unbounded ambition. Whatever men had done men could do; and so after his arrival in Lisbon he retired to a villa in the neighbourhood of St. Vincent, determined in that quiet retreat to lay his plans and make arrangements for a species of conquest that should bring honour and glory, and wealth as well, to his country, without the necessity of bloodshed."

"That," said Columbus, "is the only kind of conquest which is worthy of the ambition of a truly great man. But, pray proceed, my good brother, for I see you interest friend Leone, as you assuredly interest me."

"The story, however, is not new to you, Cristoval. Prince Henry's pet project, Leone, was the circumnavigation of Africa, so as to open a water-way to the wealth of the Indies and the far Cathay. He not only studied geography and astronomy himself, but he sent for all the talent and science that could be obtained from Spain and Italy, and even from Africa. Prince Henry's object in surrounding himself with men of talent in this way was that he might not only learn from them their views, but also compare notes.

"In the multitude of counsellors there is wisdom undoubtedly, but at the same time *tot homines, quot sententiæ*, and among those learned men some believed with Hipparchus and with Ptolemy that Africa was not circumnavigable, but that it stretched all the way to the south pole, and that its lands bounded the southern extremity of the Indian Ocean. But others again, and with them Prince Henry himself, held to the belief that not only was Africa surrounded by the ocean, but that it had positively been cir-

cumnavigated twice, once by a mariner who had sailed from the Red Sea, and continued on and round until he had reached Gibraltar, and once by a Carthaginian mariner, who, sailing from the Pillars of Hercules, and hugging the coast all along, had rounded the southern shores of Africa, and continued his voyage to Arabia.

"Well, Leone, our prince not only established a nautical college and erected an observatory, but spent his wealth in supporting it. The compass came into general use after this; navigators began to lose all their superstitious fear and dread of the ocean, which they had previously been unable to disentangle themselves from.

"Before Prince Henry's time it was believed that the equator, called the torrid zone, was a belt of flaming fire, and that whoso dared to sail south towards it, beyond a certain latitude, would be caught in a current and hurried on to fiery destruction. But for a free use of the mariner's compass, Leone, and but for the naval school upheld by Prince Henry, the Cape de Verde Islands would not have been discovered even yet.

"As soon as the prince heard that one of his ships had returned after doubling Cape Bajador, he knew that success had crowned his efforts, and that the discovery of rich and beautiful lands far to the south of this cape was only the first-fruits of his grand scheme. He saw now for Portugal a vista of profitable explorations and colonizations which was virtually boundless, and he made haste to secure for her the protection of the spiritual lord of the world, and obtained from the pope a decree granting to Portugal full authority to fly its flag over all the land her brave sons should discover. The discoveries, in fact, were to be looked upon in the light of Christian conquests."

"And methinks," said Columbus, "there is nothing more noble; and from all we read in the works of those mighty

travellers who have penetrated by land into far eastern countries, the glorious light of Jesus' gospel has never yet penetrated there.

"It may be," continued our hero after a pause—"it may be that we shall yet be able to travel around Africa by sea; but still, my good Pedro, methinks that our project of sailing west across the ocean is far more feasible and likely. What say'st thou, my good Leone?"

"As a humble sailor, who knows little of the world in which we live, compared with such great men as those in whose presence I sit, your scheme commends itself to me, Cristoval. Nor do I think you would sail for many days west without finding land. But would you not fear to lose yourself in the vastness of the mighty ocean that stretches, no one knows whither?"

"Nay, Leone, I fear nothing. Have we not in these later days better compasses, have we not cunningly devised charts, and have we not the astrolabe and the quadrant? No, we do not fear that we shall lose ourselves. But why think you that we shall soon sight land in sailing west?"

"Because," replied Leone, devoutly crossing himself and turning up his eyes—"because I have seen it."

"You!"

"Ay, myself, señor, humble though I be. Nor is the story a long one. I had sailed from Madeira in my little bark for the purpose of voyaging eastwards and north to the fair land of Spain. But lo! there arose a mighty storm, which soon blew us many many leagues to the west—one hundred leagues at least—for the wind was very high. But when morning broke at length the force of the gale had spent itself, and we were able to tack to windward. While more sail was being hoisted, that we might the more speedily make up the leagues we had lost, lo! there was a shout from a man aloft, 'Land in sight!'

"I marvelled much, but myself took my way into the top. It had now cleared considerably, and we could all see it—mountains, green hills and valleys, and even the waves of the great ocean breaking against the dark rocks.

"I would have returned and sought for a harbour, but a great fear came over all on board, and they beseeched me not to run for this land, lest they ne'er might return again to their wives and their country.

"'It is the far-famed Antilles,' said one.

"'It is St. Borodon,' cried another.

"'Or the Island of the Seven Cities,' cried a third.

"'Oh, take us not thither,' they all cried; 'it is a land of giants and of fiery dragons. Verily we will not obey you, nor touch sail or rope that is not set to hold us on our course.'"

"So you yielded to their gentle persuasions," said Columbus smiling.

"I had to, señor."

"So should I have yielded; but as soon as evening fell I should have shifted the compass and sailed back to see that strange land, and find out if indeed it were inhabited.

"But probably," he continued, "what you saw after all was but an atmospheric delusion. I have heard that the people in the Azores have a strange legend about an unknown land far to the west, yet, on bright, clear days visible enough, though sometimes disappearing before their very eyes."

"But," said Pedro, "you have proofs that you consider indubitable that very far towards the west there are new worlds to be discovered?"

"I do not say new worlds," replied Columbus with his customary caution, "but islands of a verity. Have not strange tree-stems been picked up near to the outer Cape de Verdes, and pieces of wood strangely carved by the

hand of man? Is it not even said that the bodies of two strange savage-looking men were picked up at sea, with faces and forms unlike any we have in this eastern world?"

"Do you credit this last statement?" said Leone.

"I think it is not improbable."

He seemed deep in thought for a few minutes, then continued:

"The land, Leone, that, beginning on the shores of Portugal or France, goes stretching away across the countries of Italy and Turkey, may, according to Marco Polo, be followed two-thirds round the world in a direct line until it reaches the eastern shores of India (Asia) and far Cathay, the other third, with its islands of Cipango (Japan) and many others, is the great ocean that we are now gazing on from the verandah of this villa. And the distance to Cipango and thence to Cathay cannot be over one thousand leagues.

"The route then around Africa, Pedro, would be not only twice as far but twice as dangerous as mine. Though," he added, "I doubt not that in the lapse of time both routes will be opened up. But I go to bring the east in touch with the west, and to discover those islands in which they tell us—though this is doubtless imagination—that the roofs of the very city public buildings are covered with the purest gold. But to that country which shall adopt my plans and procure me a fleet I shall add wealth greater far than prince or monarch ever dreamt of."

"That country," cried Pedro, laying his hand upon his friend's arm, "shall be Portugal."

Columbus sighed.

"I had hoped for a time," he said mournfully, "that it might be my own fair land of Liguria; but, Pedro, although there is wealth enough in Genoa to build me a larger fleet than I should desire, the prophet hath no honour in his own country. I am poor, but I am also proud. I am not bold

enough to again beg assistance from the nobles or princely merchants and traders of Genoa. 'Who is this Cristoforo?' they would ask of each other. 'He is but the son of a working weaver, who keeps a few apprentices in the San Stefano quarter, outside the gates of San Andrea.'"

"You speak truly and with reason," said Pedro. "But be not cast down on this account. Did not the Jews of old say about our blessed Saviour, 'Lo! this Jesus, is he not the son of Mary, the wife of the carpenter?'"

The eyes of Christopher Columbus sparkled as he caught his friend's hand and pressed it.

"Believe you in missions from on high?" he asked earnestly.

"Undoubtedly, Cristoval."

"Dear brother mine, do not deem me insane if I say that I myself feel that I have a mission. No bright spirit from realms above has ever appeared unto me telling me to do this or do that. I have not been advised even in a dream; yet ever since the days of my childhood a still small voice has been talking within me and beckoning me west and away, over the great mysterious ocean.

"At first, my Pedro, as I listened to it and made a firm resolve to obey it, I thought but of the glory of aggrandizing myself, my parents, and my brothers. But as time flew on I grew more ambitious; the still small voice seemed to point me westward that I might enrich countries by discovering a new route to far Cathay and all its glories. The still small voice talks to me still, but my mission, which at first I could see dimly as in a glass, I now can read as if by the light of the noonday sun, and it is, Pedro, to carry the glorious tidings of the gospel to the utmost regions of the earth, so that all shall know Him our Father, Him our Saviour, Him the Holy Ghost, from the least even to the greatest."

The moon had risen high over the sea, casting its dreamy light over the woods and the rocks, and it shone full in the noble face of Columbus, as, bending over the table, and still clasping Pedro's hand, he talked thus earnestly, impressively.

But to Pedro at that moment the moonbeams seemed to be moonbeams no longer, but a veritable light from heaven, falling on the visage of his friend, and throwing a halo round his head.

No one spoke for a few seconds. All three were awed, and their voices were hushed; for verily there appeared to be a fourth presence there in the midst of them.

Pedro was the first to recover himself.

He rose slowly from his seat.

"Men," he said solemnly, "this is a holy hour. Let us pray."

A few minutes afterwards, when the beautiful Felipa, the wife of Columbus, stole out on tiptoe to the verandah, she found the three men kneeling there in silence, and stole quietly back into the room again, fearful lest her footsteps might disturb them.

CHAPTER VIII.

A VISIT TO THE DEAR OLD HOME.

THE first years of Columbus's married life were spent in hard work and comparative poverty. Yet greatly to his credit it is to be recorded that he did not forget to assist his aged father and mother nor his young sister and brothers. They were now living at Savona, a place by the seaside, and were in fairly comfortable circumstances, thanks in a great measure to Christopher's kindness and liberality. When we remember that his wife brought Columbus no

wealth or dowry in any shape, and that all the money he made was the result of long days of toil and nights of brain work, we cannot, I think, too much admire his kindliness of heart and filial generosity.

But it must not be supposed that the married life of our hero in any way compelled his constantly remaining on shore. Very far from it. We know that although his art as a cosmographer and chart-maker was very great, and would have sufficed to maintain himself and family in independence though not in luxury, he was constantly making voyages southward. We have evidence that he visited the Cape de Verdes, Sierra Leone, and Guinea, and was even present during wars with the natives, that were carried on along the African coast.

As they annexed territory, the Portuguese partially colonized it, in glens by the seaside, building forts at their towns and villages to fall back upon in case of being hard pressed by the warlike and savage races of the interior. They also made constant expeditions, or rather raids, far inland in search of gold, and thus much of that precious metal, as well as spices of various sorts, skins, and ivory found its way to Portugal.

But the time was now near for Columbus to make a formal offer of his valuable services to the King of Portugal. He would have done so long ere now, but like a wise man held back until all his plans were completed and all proofs in favour of his theory, which he could possibly collect, ready at hand.

. . . . . .

Christopher Columbus while on shore was living at Lisbon with his wife and boy Diego, now a child of some four or five years of age.

Like all sailors, Christopher's thoughts often turned towards his old home, the home of his parents, in Genoa,

and before paying a visit to the King of Portugal and laying his plans before him, he determined to see his parents once more.

I have already stated that one of the marked characteristics of our hero's nature was his trustfulness and simplicity. He was good and honest himself, he had the welfare of the world at his heart, and it never entered into his mind to conceive or imagine that other people might not think just as he did. He believed most implicitly that, with the great desire for wealth and territory the Portuguese government had for so long a time been exhibiting, he had only to present himself at court, lay his schemes before King Ioão II., and have them adopted.

Alas! he had yet to discover the folly of putting one's trust in princes.

When he landed, therefore, at Genoa in the year 1482, he was full of hope and joy. It was years since he had been here before, yet he knew that not only his parents but his friends were alive and well. And now his intention was to give them all a joyful surprise.

First and foremost, as the house was not far off the harbour, he determined to call upon Diego. He wondered if the old man—for old man he would now be—would know him.

He was not left long in doubt, for lo! hardly had he reached the end of the street that led to Diego's humble abode ere he met the old sailor himself coming briskly along towards him.

The joy of meeting was mutual, for Diego knew his little friend, as he used to call him, in a moment.

"Ah me! ah me!" he cried somewhat sadly, "but verily it makes me feel old to look at you. And, Cristoforo, my boy, how changed you are! Why, your hair is far whiter than mine!"

"That is true, Diego; I have had to struggle hard with

the world. But, bless you, my friend, I do not feel old. I have more struggles yet before me, and much to do that I have resolved to accomplish before I die. But come, walk with me to the house of my friend Giacomo Bavarello. Doubtless he too is changed."

"Oh, not one whit, little friend. Though he is but two years younger than yourself, his hair is still as dark as Erebus, and his form erect and handsome."

"He always was a handsome lad."

"Ah! Cristoforo, there is only one handsomer being ever seen in Savona, and that is a she."

"And, good Diego, who may the she be?"

"And the she is frequently with Giacomo, for he walks all the way over to visit her every Saturday evening."

"But, Diego, you haven't told me yet who this beautiful she is."

"And they do tell me that Giacomo and she are soon to be married, and—"

"Why, how provoking you are, Diego! It does strike me you are in your dotage. Come, old friend, keep me no longer in suspense."

"Well, can you guess a riddle?"

"No, no, no."

"The she is—"

Diego paused, looking laughingly up into Cristoforo's face. The eyes of the latter began to sparkle with delight.

"Diego! Diego!" he cried, "you cannot mean to imply that my dearest friend Giacomo intends to wed my sweet little sister Blanchineta?"

"But indeed I do."

"Come, come, Diego, let us walk more quickly. Nay, for this once I will not take into account the age of your legs. Hurry, I say, or I shall carry you on my back; for I long to embrace Giacomo, and call him brother."

They found Giacomo busy at the receipt of custom in a shop not far from that which had been his father's, and it is needless to say the meeting was a very happy one.

Cristoforo's next visit was to the monks of San Stefano. This was not so pleasant, for he found that grim Death had been here with his scythe, and that the ranks of the good fathers were sadly thinned.

One or two of the very oldest of them, however, who had been among the first friends of Columbus, when he was but a toddling boy, were still alive and happy, and to them Cristoforo related what he was pleased to call his coming triumph. He had quite a long conversation with them, for something seemed to tell him that he would never see them more.

He departed, therefore, at last from the monastery with something akin to sorrow at his heart, but with the blessings of his old friends ringing in his ears and giving him hope.

Next day Giacomo and Cristoforo walked along the coast to Savona, and towards afternoon, hand in hand, the brothers—soon to be—walked up the little cottage garden, and stood before Cristoforo's parents.

The meeting was very affecting, for Cristoforo's mother, quite unable to control her feelings, threw herself into her son's arms and sobbed on his breast. He soothed her gently, and led her to a seat.

That evening was a very happy one nevertheless.

As in the dear old times, Cristoforo sat between his father and mother, and very much indeed there was to tell and to talk about, which may be better imagined than described.

Nearly ten years had elapsed since Cristoforo had seen his parents, and although his father was still hale and hearty, his mother was sadly changed. But she listened with all a parent's love and pride to every word her noble son had to say, and fully entered into all his plans and

schemes heart and soul; but she sighed when he finished the relation.

"Why is my dear mother sad?" said Cristoforo.

"Because," she replied, with tears in her eyes, "I shall not be alive to see my son return in triumph."

"Nay, nay, dear mother, speak not thus; I cannot bear to hear such words. You shall not only see my triumph, but you shall share it."

But his mother only shook her head.

And this presentiment she then had turned out to be only too true, for in another year's time, to use her son's own words, "God took her unto Himself."

Cristoforo stayed for many days with his parents at Savona, and during his rambles along the beach his constant companions were his sister Blanchineta and his youngest brother of all, named Diego. He was a lad of only sixteen years of age, and boy-like hung upon every word his hero brother spoke.

Before he left Savona this youth made Cristoforo promise that after he returned to Europe in triumph, he would send for him—Diego—and permit him to share some of his wild adventures in foreign lands.

In describing this visit of Cristoforo's to his native place, it will be noted that I make no mention of his brothers, Giovanni and Bartolomeo. But the former was dead, and Bartolomeo, who while yet a boy had been our hero's constant companion and fellow-student, was then in Portugal. Our hero dearly loved this brother, and the attachment was certainly reciprocated. It would not be too much to say that Cristoforo had done more even towards the moulding of Bartolomeo's character than even the father had done. The younger brother had ever been most impressionable, and had looked up to the elder, and respected every word he said. Indeed he was his hero of heroes, and could not do wrong.

It is very often the case that one brother becomes hero to another in a family, and this only proves that a deep responsibility often lies upon the shoulders of a first-born brother, and that he cannot live too pure and noble a life, seeing that his every word and action is noted and followed by his younger brothers. This is especially true in cases where the first-born is naturally clever, and is made much of by his parents.

. . . . . .

Cristoforo's parting with his father, but particularly with his mother, was both a sad and a tender one. The dear old lady kept up as well as she could until he was gone, but after this, and when Domenico led her back into the little room, that seemed now so lonesome and cheerless because the dear voice and presence that had brightened it was no longer there, she gave way to a perfect abandonment of grief. She was like Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted.

When Cristoforo was still within ten miles of Genoa, and close to the shore, he noticed a boat some little distance out at sea, the two figures in which were waving their arms and signalling to him. When they rowed themselves nearer he was rejoiced to find they were Diego, the old sailor boatman, and Giacomo Bavarello himself.

"I declare, my friends," said Cristoforo after he had got seated, "this is just like old times."

"We thought you would be pleased," said Giacomo; "it was an idea of Diego's. There is a little wind blowing in the right direction which may die away towards sunset, so what say you if we sail out to our old fishing-bank. Then it will be still more like old times."

"With all the pleasure I am capable of," replied Cristoforo.

So the boat was kept well off shore, the breeze freshened

somewhat, and soon they were rushing through the water. In little over an hour's time they had reached the fishing-ground, and set to work.

"Why," cried Diego, as fish after fish was hauled on board, "this is rare good fortune. By our Lady, little friend, I do believe that the fishes are all glad to see you back again once more!"

The three friends kept up the sport for hours, talking much all the while, not only about old times, but about bright days to come, and a golden future.

Then the sun began to decline in the west, and the boat's prow was turned shorewards.

The wind was very light now, so that but little progress was made, and by and by the sun went down behind the Ligurian Alps, and a rich orange glow tinted all the cloudless west.

"Dear Diego, dear Giacomo," cried Cristoforo, "I feel as if I were a boy once more, that all my strange life and all my many wanderings are but part and parcel of a dream. I feel that I have but to land on yonder beach on which the orange-tinted foam is breaking to find my way back to the home of my childhood at the San Andrea gate. Hark!" he continued, lifting up a forefinger.

It was the chime of the evening bells wafted over the waves, just as it used to be in the dear old days for ever gone.

Gone? Ay, gone. Gone for ever and aye. And Cristoforo seemed to realize this. A wave of sadness came stealing over his heart, he placed both hands upon his face and burst into tears.

CHAPTER IX.

"GOOD-BYE, BARTOLOMEO. FARE THEE WELL!"

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS awakened one morning about two years after the events described in last chapter with hope in his heart. I will not say joy. Joy was a thing that, strange as it may appear, our hero had almost ceased to feel. For grief had overtaken him during the past twelve months, and both his mother and his beloved wife were laid in the grave.

But on this particular morning he had hope. He took his little motherless boy and set him on his breast as he lay in bed, and talked long and cheerfully to him; and the lad opened his dreamy eyes wider and wider as his father told him of all the wonderful sights he should witness when he went away to sea once more, and discovered new islands for the king.

"And I," lisped the boy, "may I not go too, father?"

"Some day, dear little one. Yes, some day."

"Is mother in the far-off country you speak of, and may I go to her?"

"Some day, little one; some day, Diego."

The tears were in the father's eyes.

"I wish the time was come," said the child.

"But where do you think I am going to-day, dearest?"

"Not away to sea to-day, father?"

"No, not away to sea. I am going to-day to visit the king, and he will prepare me great ships, and I shall sail away to find the beautiful countries and all the delightful things I have been telling you about."

"And mother? Oh, mind you must find mother."

"Yes, boy, yes; one day we shall both find mother; and now Diego must stay with his uncle Bartolomeo, till his father returns rejoicing from the court of the great king."

Christopher did return rejoicing from court, and with renewed hopes that the great dream of his life would soon be fulfilled.

The king had received him with much courtesy, seating the great and learned mariner at his right hand, while he listened to all he had to say and unfolded all his plans before him.

He could confidently promise the king wealth and riches beyond that possessed by any monarch on earth, if he but followed his advice, and sent him to discover the new route —the western passage to the Indies, and to the rich islands that lay near to them.

He had brought to the court all the newest instruments and all the newest charts, together with letters from many of the greatest astronomers and cosmographers in the world, among others Toscanelli, with whom he had been for a long time in communication. This astronomer was a Florentine, and undoubtedly one of the most learned astronomers then living.

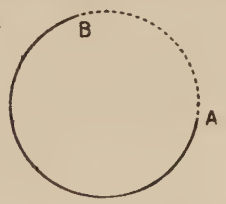
This professor felt assured that by sailing westwards Columbus would succeed in finding the eastern shores of India, and he dilated upon the wealth and beauty of the countries he should come to. He had himself, he said in one letter, seen and conversed with an ambassador at Rome, who had been sent thither by the Great Khan himself, and who had told him, Toscanelli, of all the marvels of the East, of harbours wherein at one time might be counted as many as a hundred vessels, laden with gold, and gems, and spices, and of a great river, crossed by over a hundred bridges of the purest marble. The wealth of all these towns, and cities, and islands but waited for the new passage 'twixt

east and west to be discovered, to bear them over the sea to the countries whose mariner sons were bold enough to brave the dangers of the ocean.

Now, in the best charts of those days, even in Toscanelli's, one very grave error is made, and this consisted in a too meagre estimation of the size of this world of ours, and in believing that the eastern shores of Asia, then called India, were very much nearer to those of Spain than they actually are.

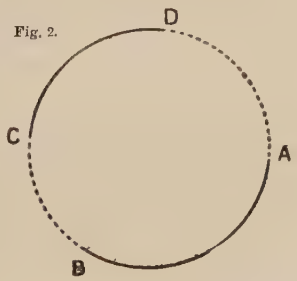
Toscanelli and Columbus both believed that in sailing westwards from the Mediterranean or Gibraltar, only an open ocean had to be crossed, of something less, perhaps, than a thousand leagues in extent before reaching Asia. They had no idea that a mighty continent lay between stretching almost from pole to pole, from the icy regions of the north across the tropics and torrid zone and far away south to ice again.

Fig. 1



The rude diagrams I give in the margin will suffice to impress upon the mind of the reader what I wish to convey. Fig. 1 is an imaginary line passing round the world, as Columbus and Toscanelli believed it to be. Fig. 2 is an imaginary line passing round it, as we know it to be. The dark portion of each line represents land, the dotted water.

Fig. 2.



The world of those days was, according to Columbus's theory, as small in proportion to that which it really is as

a shilling is to a penny piece, and it is with these handy coins I have made my diagrams, placing them on the paper and drawing my pen around them.

In fig. 1, then, *A* represents the western shores of Europe, say France or Portugal, and *B* the eastern shores of India or Asia, the dotted line between *A* and *B* being the ocean, which Columbus imagined was all he should have to navigate in order to reach Asia.

In fig. 2, *A* once more represents the western shores of Europe, and *B* the eastern shores of Asia, but between *B* and *C* lies the wide Pacific Ocean; then comes the three thousand miles of land representing the width of the vast continent of America, and reaching to *D* in the diagram, and after this the Atlantic Ocean, or Great Sea of Columbus, as it ought in all fairness to be called.

And now I have to say, that although the King of Portugal was greatly interested in our hero's plans, and quite as courteous as e'er a king could be—sending poor Columbus away, verily, with tears of gratitude in his eyes—no sooner had he gone, than he forthwith summoned a council of his very greatest thinkers, among others, the Bishop of Ceuta, and submitting to them all the mariner's plans and schemes bade them retire and consider them. Having done so, they were to hand in their report to the king, and he should adopt their ideas and be guided by their judgment.

And the judgment of these men went dead against Columbus. Especially was the Bishop of Ceuta bitter in his sarcasms against our hero. He, for one, he openly told his fellows and the king as well, was averse to the annexation of further empire. If Portugal in Europe were properly ruled, the king would find enough to do, for foreign conquest only served to distract the minds of people at home, and build up within them hopes and desires that could only

end in disappointment and death. He said much more that was bitter and cruel against Columbus—nor was he the only one who did so—denouncing him as a mere adventurer, whose schemes were chimerical, and whose objects were not the aggrandizement of Portugal but his own.

Now, had Columbus been made acquainted in a straightforward manner with the result of the conference between the king's councillors, matters would not have appeared so bad. On the contrary, he was kept in the dark, living almost in penury, and hoping against hope.

The treachery of the Portuguese king's councillors was hateful in the extreme, for they advised his majesty to obtain copies of the charts of Columbus, to make use of all the knowledge that in the trusting simplicity of his nature he had laid before them, and to despatch a large well-manned and armed caravel to seek for the golden shores that Columbus had told them of. If the captain of this caravel succeeded in reaching across the Atlantic, then could Portugal be enriched, without having to pay our hero anything for the knowledge furnished by him.

So infamous a piece of advice would have been scorned by a king who was also a gentleman, but instead of this he adopted it, and away sailed the caravel. It touched at the De Verde Islands, then bore westward for many days.

But storms came on, and the captain and crew soon lost heart and returned.

When Columbus at length discovered how he had been treated, his indignation was naturally very great, and he determined forthwith to shake the dust of Lisbon from his shoes and leave Portugal at once, and, as he then believed, for ever.

His domestic affairs were at this time in a sad plight, but his generous-hearted brother Bartolomé promised to be his very second self as far as the management of these were

concerned. Indeed, at this time of his life the "personal estate," as lawyers would call it, of our hero was a very small one indeed. It probably consisted of the clothes he wore, and in what he could carry for himself and his brave little boy Diego, as they both set out to trudge on foot to Spain.

What then, it may be asked, had his brother to do? His brother undertook to see that the just demands of Christopher's few creditors were met as they ought to be. That was about all.

On the evening before the day of his departure Columbus had seen everyone who had a claim against him, informing them that he was going away, and that his brother would see to everything. So strong was the belief in the uprightness and integrity of the brothers Columbus, that those he bade farewell to parted with him with tears in their eyes, and more than one offered him money.

In his heart of hearts Christopher registered a vow that, when happier times came round again, he would not forget the disinterested kindness of those humble people he had lived amongst so long.

Although possessed of far less of what we may term genius than his brother, Bartolomé was, nevertheless, far more a man of the world, and more skilled in the world's ways. He was himself an excellent draughtsman, and many a chart which he drew found its way to the uttermost ends of the then known world.

Had Christopher been like Bartolomé, had he been less trusting and confiding in others, it might have been better for him. Yet who knows? Simplicity at all events is one of the most charming characteristics of every true-hearted son of Neptune, and who would wish it otherwise?

"Good-bye, Bartolomé! Fare thee well, dear brother! When all others desert us God himself seems ever so much nearer. May the Lord be with you then. Kiss Diego."

"Heaven's blessing be around you, Cristoforo, wherever you go."

The two men said no more.

They silently embraced each other, and turned away to hide their tears.

CHAPTER X.

"I ALONE UNDERTAKE THIS ENTERPRISE FOR MY CROWN OF CASTILE."

IT was the afternoon of a bright clear day in January 1485, with roads all hardened with an air of frost wherever the trees hid them from the sun's rays, when Columbus and his boy set out on their long journey. They had but little money, they had but scanty clothing, but the father had hope in his heart,—a hope and a joy that could not be taken away from him.

He held his little lad by the hand, and spoke but seldom until far away from the busy town, and high up on a hill to the right. Here he paused and sat down by the wayside to rest his boy.

Far away from the rocky shore beneath stretched the blue sea, dotted with many a quaint white sail, that hardly had wind enough to carry them on their way. On the distant horizon, sea and sky seemed to melt and soften into each other. You could not have told where one ended and the other began.

Christopher had taken his boy on his knee to chafe his little cold hands.

"You see the ocean, little son?" he said.

"Oh yes, father, I can see it; but I don't see your ships."

"No, boy, they have not come yet. The king has not been so very kind as I expected, Diego."

"Oh, I should like to kill the king!" cried the boy.

"Nay, nay, Diego, that would not be manly. The king has been badly advised. I go to see another and a braver king, and perhaps he will find me ships. We must hope, and hope, and hope. If this great king refuses, then perhaps all kings will, yet I shall not lose heart, because I shall know that the King of Kings who rules all the earth, and even the sun and moon and stars, deems me not worthy to make the great discovery. But even then, Diego, I shall not be unhappy, because I shall know that some greater navigator than I am will one day complete my work. Do you understand, dear?"

"A little, father. But, father, I cannot see the far-off beautiful countries with the apples of gold upon their trees, that you have often told me about. I cannot see the end of the ocean nor the beginning of that beautiful land. That is the west, is it not, father, where the sun is going down?"

"Yes, little son."

"But it is all a white blue mist, father."

"And all a mystery at present, my Diego. That mist will all be lifted off, and one day we will see all things bright and clear, or —"

He did not finish his sentence, but once more began the march, for night would soon fall, and, almost penniless as he was, he knew not where they might sleep.

On and on they trudge, on and on.

The sun has gone down. Christopher has looked his last on the gorgeous cloudscape and seascape, and, carrying his child, his own sturdy limbs beginning to ache a little now, walks more slowly on through the gathering gloom.

Must he beg for shelter? No, he scorns to do that. A friendly hedge or hay-stack may be all the shelter they will

have to-night. But even this must not be despised. Christopher still has a few coins left, but he must hoard them for the boy's sake.

Hospitality is confined to no creed and to no country, and when Christopher and his boy ask the distance to the nearest inn at a humble peasant, who is standing by the door of a little hut, he is in no way surprised to be kindly welcomed in, and asked to remain till morning light.

So the simple faith that our hero puts in the guidance of his Father above is not misplaced.

Nor has he and his little lad to want for food or for drink till they find themselves at Palos, on the banks of the river Tinto.

Although the shades of evening are already beginning to fall as they enter the little town, and though both are weary and foot-sore,—for they have toiled all day across the mountains,—Christopher's hopes are high, because he has relations in the town.

Or had! Ah, but his face falls and his boy begins to cry, as, having asked to be directed to their house, he finds that they have left and gone to Seville.

And Seville is a long and toilsome march of over thirty miles from Palos.

The woman whom Christopher interrogated had a kindly face. She turned to go away, but something in the wanderer's appearance appeals to her, and she comes back. They look both sad and poor, but they are not ordinary mendicants.

It would not do to tell that mild-eyed man with open countenance and gentle beaming eyes, that he might find food and shelter at the convent. But she refers them to that holy place nevertheless.

"The monks," she says, "of the monastery of La Rabida could tell you all about the Muliartes, your friends. And it is only a walk of half an hour."

"Thank you and bless you," says Columbus. "Mayhap Heaven has sent me to this place, after all."

Bidding her good-night, and carrying Diego now, he turns his face once more seaward, and begins to ascend the steep and winding path which is the nearest way to La Rabida.

The convent stands high on a rock or hill, a gloomy-looking place enough, the night wind sighing dismally through the pine-trees and dark cypresses that wave around it.

Poor little Diego is fast asleep in his father's arms, as he seats himself on the steps of the cross near to the convent gate. He is very tired, and besides he feels that for the time being he lacks courage.

Courage that bold sailor never lacked on the stormiest night at sea, nor courage, sword in hand, to hold his own on the blood-slippery battle-deck. But courage to beg?—ah! that is a kind of courage he has never needed till now.

He lifts his eyes towards Heaven in prayer.

"God, strengthen my weak faint heart," is all he says. Then his eyes fall once more on the face of his sleeping boy. They linger there for a time. Just as he is now with his closed eyes and long drooping eyelashes, he reminds him so of her that is gone. He kisses the child's brow, gathers him more closely to his breast, and walks towards the gate.

Next moment he rings the bell.

Dogs bark as the sound clangs through the silent old pile, and presently shuffling footsteps are heard approaching. A question or two is asked, and the gates are thrown open wide. Then, before he has even time to ask for a little bread for the child's sake, one of the young monks, Marchena by name, invites the wanderers in, and leads them to the fire.

Here Columbus hardly speaks a word save one or two of thanks until he has soothed and warmed his boy.

Then food and drink are placed before them, and, thanking Heaven most fervently, Columbus breaks bread and eats.

It is very late before he is conducted to his apartment that night, for to the listening monks he has told all his long story, laid before them his charts and maps, and explained his aspirations.

No wonder that when he retires to his little room at last he falls upon his knees beside his little Diego, and thanks his Father in heaven for having guided his footsteps to the convent of La Rabida.

For Columbus has found friends.

He has found in Marchena, as we shall presently see, the best and truest friend in the world, and one willing to help him.

Marchena's kindness, however, did not end with words of advice or comfort either.

"You must go out into the world," he told Columbus next morning, "and fight this battle of yours alone. You must not be hampered even by the charge of this dear child. See, he already looks upon me as a friend. I will be a friend and a father also to the boy until you return. You will stay with me, will you not, Diego?"

"Is father going to a good king?"

"Yes, the best of kings."

"And he will some day find mother?"

"Assuredly he will, dear son."

"Go, father," said the boy, resting his head on Marchena's breast. "But do not stay very long away."

. . . . . .

The whole story of Columbus's future troubles, until he found himself fairly afloat and his voyage commenced, is too long to tell in detail. But it reads like a romance, though when he looked back upon those seven years of toil and struggle, of disappointment, of sorrow, and of hope deferred till the very heart grew faint and all but failed, he must have felt as if he had just awakened from a tedious and painful dream.

But in all his struggles he could not help but see that he had been guided by the all-seeing hand of Providence.

Often in this world while trying to do our duty we stumble and fall. Oftentimes the world appears to us all cold and dark, and our hearts sink with very lonesomeness as friends stand aloof, and dark enough our path may be; but our minds, we should remember, are only finite. We cannot understand the mystery of a thousand and one griefs and ills that Heaven seems to permit, and that we see around us. There is a light burning in the far beyond though, and we cannot do better than keep our eyes on that. We have a Good Pilot on board. We cannot do better than trust Him as implicitly as the child Diego trusted to his father Columbus. That Pilot is capable of guiding us safely into the haven of rest, be the seas around us ever so wild and the winds ever so high. We have but to be hopeful, and calm, and do our duty.

At the time Columbus left the convent of La Rabida and the only real treasure he now had on earth, he had, as we know, hardly a penny in the world to keep him from starvation. But at Seville he met with kind friends. Not to keep or maintain him. Oh, no! Columbus would have died now rather than beg for a crust. But friends that found him introductions to others, who gave him work. He soon began to flourish once again, though in a humble way. He was able at all events to pay all he was owing, to send money to the convent where his boy was, and to send a little also to support his father.

His sister was married by this time, and to the young couple his father had given up the house at Genoa, near the San Andrea gate, where Columbus had lived as a boy.

From his experience in Portugal, but probably as much from the advice of his brother Bartolomé as anything else, Christopher had learned a useful lesson. While determined

to do all in his power to succeed with his great project in Spain, he determined to leave no stone unturned that might possibly be a stepping-stone to success.

At various times, therefore, we find him making an offer of his services and projects to Genoa, to Venice, and even to England, to which latter country he sent his brother Bartolomé.

But all negotiations for one reason or another fell through. Meanwhile, Columbus was fast making good friends in Seville and in Spain generally—friends among the wealthy, friends among the learned, and friends at court.

The wealthiest of his friends was no doubt the rich and busy Duke of Medina Celi. This was a nobleman whose gallant forbears had fought so well for Henry of Trastamara, that he was not only awarded titles but the hand of a princess.

It is said that Columbus, having been invited to spend some time with the duke at his place near Cadiz, so won his heart and so enlisted his every sympathy with the great cause that, but for the fact that the nobleman thought so great a project ought to have royal patronage, he would have fitted out ships himself and sent our hero afloat.

Columbus, much to his delight, was therefore introduced to court, and was granted audience of the king and queen, Ferdinand and Isabella.

As you must know, if you are a student of history, this queen was not only very beautiful but also very clever, and so was her husband. She had already conquered and humbled the Portuguese; and, at the time Columbus first saw her, she had one great object in view for which she was straining every nerve, and that was to drive the Moors bag and baggage out of Spain, or thoroughly to rout and to destroy them.

It is very pleasant for us to know that this Spanish queen was of English descent, and blue-eyed as so many of the Saxon race are. Ferdinand was also very clever, and he was very brave, yet simple in dress, diet, and in all his ways. In other words he was a king all over. Of the two, however, king and queen, it must be admitted that the latter was by far and away the more noble character. Indeed, it does one good to read of so good, and kindly-hearted, and patriotic a lady.

It has been said that she made promise after promise to Columbus, and afterwards wantonly broke them all. But we must remember that she was an exceedingly busy woman, her mind almost entirely filled with affairs of state, and that to rule a country of so many and varied interests as Spain was then, to retain her friends, to restrain her foes at court, and yet to hold the helm of good government and to carry on a war to the knife against the Moslems was no easy task, and might well excuse her from thinking of less weighty matters.

Nevertheless Columbus charmed her. "As soon as we can," thus might the pith of her promise to him be worded —"as soon as we can we shall fit you out, and you shall sail with a fleet to discover for our realm the route to the west which leads to the far Indies."

At length a junto was assembled of the most learned and most religious men combined in the convent of San Stefano at Salamanca to consider Columbus's proposals and plans.

Alas, that bigotry and ignorance should have gone hand in hand to mar our hero's schemes! But such was the case. The junto decreed against him. They even held up his plans to such ridicule that the great man was pointed at on the street as a madman or a fool.

But Columbus was not discouraged even yet. He quietly pursued his studies and went on with the work that Pro-

vidence seemed to have appointed him to do. He did his duty, and left all the rest to Heaven.

He made more good friends in high places after this, one of whom was the Prior of San Estevan, Diego Deza by name; and it was through him that the queen once more heard of the fame of Columbus, remembered her promises, recalled him to court and took him into her service at Cordova.

His residence here led to his becoming acquainted with the family of Arana, which was both wealthy and titled. Acquaintanceship soon ripened into the closest friendship, and during the absence of the queen at Zaragossa, Columbus was almost constantly at the mansion of the Aranas.

Don Pedro de Arana had a beautiful sister whom Columbus afterwards married.

This is not a love story, else I could afford to linger over the romantic attachment that was gradually formed betwixt our hero and Beatriz. A hero indeed he was to her, and she a kind and sympathizing friend to him from the first. Columbus might have told us of this attachment in the words of Shakespeare, and said—

"Her father lov'd me; oft invited me;
Still questioned me the story of my life,
From year to year,—the battles, sieges, fortunes,
That I have pass'd.
I ran it through, even from my boyish days
To the very moment that he bade me tell it;
Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,
Of moving accidents by flood and field,
Of hair-breadth 'scapes i' th' imminent deadly breach;
. . . . . .
It was my hint to speak,—such was the process."

About one year after the marriage of Beatriz and Columbus, that is in fourteen hundred and eighty-eight, the child Fernando was born. He it was who in after years became his father's biographer.

It need hardly be said that our hero never lost sight of his elder boy, Diego, to whom the monks of La Rabida had been so truly kind and good. He was now taken home to Cordova, and was soon very much beloved by his step-mother, his life being thus rendered a very happy one. He was afterwards chosen by Queen Isabella as one of the royal pages for the young Prince Juan.

But our hero's troubles were not yet over. Although for a year or two after his marriage he remained comparatively inactive he began once more his endeavours to mature his schemes, and now he determined to bring matters to a crisis one way or the other.

His brother Bartolomé was still at Lisbon, so thither went Columbus once more to consult with him. I am most unwilling to believe that my hero once more laid his plans before the King of Portugal. His brother Bartolomé might possibly have done so on his behalf. But even this is doubtful.

However, there was one last resource quite independent of Spain, namely France. His faithful brother undertook to go with him to interview that king, should all hope have to be abandoned by Columbus from Queen Isabella.

And now we are getting near to the end of the story of the early struggles of our mariner of old.

Thinking perhaps that he might ingratiate himself with King Ferdinand and his queen if he became a soldier, he fought for a long time against the Moors at the siege of Baza.

This did him little if any good when he endeavoured, in vain, to gain once more audience of Isabella. This great and clever lady is not to be rudely blamed for her seeming neglect of Columbus. That she still believed in him and in his is no doubt true, but she had advisers at court under whom—notably Talavera—she was in some matters even

like a child. Moreover, at this time she was very busy indeed, for the great siege of Granada was on the tapis, and she had many other things to engage her attention, notably the forthcoming marriage of her daughter, Isabella.

Poor Columbus felt utterly worn out with waiting so long, and now made up his mind to seek his fortunes at the court of France. It was a kind of forlorn hope, but nothing else seemed left to him.

So, taking with him his son Diego, he left Seville and directed his course towards the coast. At the port of Palos he expected he would be able to find a vessel to land him in France.

It was but natural he should call and see the monks of La Rabida.

It was eventide when Columbus once more reached the gate of the convent and rang the bell. Once more he heard the dogs bark, just as he had done seven years before this, once more he heard shuffling steps approach, and once more the door was opened by Marchena himself.

"Come in, come in; and is this my little son? How he has grown! Ah, friend! and you too have grown—you have grown, pardon me, just a little older."

The two men embraced each other.

"It is because hope deferred maketh sick the heart, my friend," said Columbus, with sad accents in his voice.

"But come in. Nay, you shall not tell us a word of your story until you have broken bread and drunk a little wine."

"How like old times!" said Columbus that evening when he was seated at table with Marchena and Juan Perez, a very old man who was head of the convent. "How like old times, except that my son is a big lad now, and I am broken in spirit and hopeless!"

"Nay, nay, that must not be," said the aged guardian.

"You must not leave Spain, but stay here with us until I myself have written to the queen. I am her old confessor, peradventure she may listen to me."

Perez did as he proposed, and despatched a letter to her majesty at Santa Fé before Granada. In due time the reply came, and Perez was himself ordered to the queen's presence.

So well did the old man fight Columbus's battle that money was almost at once sent to him, in order that he might purchase suitable raiment and come in person to court.

From the very day of his appearance at Granada things began to work on towards his ultimate success, and although he had many enemies at court he had also many friends, chief among whom we must place the old Juan Perez, the guardian of the La Rabida convent. It was owing entirely to his exertions indeed, coupled with those of the Marquesa de Moya, that the concessions made to our hero were at length made by Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, and Christopher was created Admiral of the Ocean.

But yet it must be stated here, albeit it detracts somewhat from the romance of this strange story of manful struggle against fearful odds, negotiations—all owing to the concessions that Columbus had a positive right to demand—were almost falling through at the very last, for the chief of these concessions were that he should be declared not only Admiral of the Ocean around the islands and countries which he might discover, but their Viceroy as well. Nothing less would satisfy him, and although the queen was ready to grant this stipulation, Talavera, her confessor and adviser, was bitter against it.

It was then that Columbus showed his true spirit, and proved that the blood of the old Colombo family could really come uppermost when necessity demanded it. He

must be Admiral and Viceroy or nothing, and this being refused he had quietly mounted his mule and ridden away from Granada, determined never to trust his fortunes to Spanish royalty again.

It was then that Luis de St. Angel and the Marquesa rushed half frantically into their sovereign's presence, and so eloquently did they plead the cause of Columbus with the queen, that although her husband would have held back even at this most critical moment, she cried aloud:

"I alone then will undertake this enterprise for my crown of Castile, and I am willing to pledge my own jewels to meet the expense!"

A messenger was despatched at once after Columbus to report to him that all his concessions had been acceded to, and thus the proud honour of the greatest discovery the world has ever known must be conceded to Spain.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

ALL READY FOR SEA.

THE year of our Lord fourteen hundred and ninety-two! A never-to-be-forgotten year in the annals of Spain! A never-to-be-forgotten year in the world's great history!

So determined was Queen Isabella to sweep the proud Moors from out her fair realms, that the city of Granada, which was their greatest stronghold, had been laid siege to under a vow that the camp before it, the camp of Santa Fé, should become a town and never be moved until the foe capitulated.

And worn out by fighting, by constant fatigue, starvation, and sickness, Granada fell at last; the royal banners floated proudly over the towers of the Alhambra, and the Moorish king was led forth from the city gates a prisoner, to kneel before Isabella and her consort and kiss their hands.

Then came the triumph of Columbus. All his early struggles were over from the moment he bade their royal highnesses farewell at Santa Fé and set out for Palos. The terms he had asked were agreed to, the bargain with Spain was struck. Genius had triumphed, the poor weaver boy of Genoa was now a Spanish nobleman, admiral of the ocean, and viceroy of all the islands and countries he should

discover in the unknown West. And these titles were to descend from sire to son or heir, to all generations.

But Columbus had still his part of the compact to fulfil, and well might his queen and his adopted country trust him.

He would do or die at his post. He would give neither sleep to his eyes nor slumber to his eyelids—he would do naught that should hinder him now from following up his schemes and bringing them to a triumphant end.

So busy had he been at Granada before he left that he had scarcely time to realize his proud position. But now on board the vessel that is bearing him from Malaga to the little port of Palos, as the shades of evening make gray the sea, behold him leaning over the port bulwarks, his eyes resting thoughtfully on the after-glow of sunset. Birds wheel screaming around the caravel; he hears them not. There is the hurried and frequent tramp of the seamen on deck as they trim sails, and there is the shouting of orders by the master, for the night breeze is freshening, but Columbus heeds nothing. And the after-glow fades away at last and stars peep out even in the west, as over the eastern sea they have long since been shining, and our hero turns away with a sigh.

What, Columbus sighing! And this too the first hour he has had to consider his position, to meditate on the victory he seems already to have gained! But marvel not; the first effects of a great joy or success after a long-continued period of struggle and of hope deferred are ever akin to melancholy. The cloud that now rested on his mind, for a time, Columbus was unable to account for. As the reader already knows, he was a man whose every action in life was governed by a deep sense of religious feeling. Not, mind you, that he never fell. I do not claim for my hero that he was immaculate or sinless. Very far from it. But

his backslidings never led him to the belief, so common with many a faint-hearted Christian, that he could not be forgiven. We are not to go on sinning wilfully simply because mercy is infinite—this was the creed of Christopher Columbus,—but if ever we imagine that our sins are too great to be forgiven, at that moment the spirit of evil is intentionally placing a cloud between the great white throne and our poor grief-stricken souls.

When this evening Columbus retired to his little cabin in the after-part of the caravel, he fell on his knees and prayed to Heaven and to "Our Lady" to dispel the mists of melancholy that had settled on his heart and soul.

He retired now, and when the morning sun once more rose over the waves Columbus sprang from his couch refreshed and calm. The cloud was gone from off his mind, and hope and joy had taken its place.

Our hero had purposely chosen to come to Palos by sea because he desired quiet in order to lay his future plans. The slow progress of the lumbering caravel gave him plenty of time for meditation, for at no time before passing the Gut of Gibraltar did she make over five knots or nautical miles an hour.

But soon after this the breeze freshened, blowing from the south and west, and the lateen sails bellied out, the caravel flying swiftly before it and dashing the spray high over her forecastle as she plunged into the seas.

Columbus's spirits rose with the wind.

Before this he had not spoken to anyone on board, not even to the master himself. But now he evinced every inclination to converse. The moody, drooping man that the sailors had at first almost feared developed into the hearty and genial sailor, who took an interest in the sailing of the vessel, and even gave the master hints that were of use to him in avoiding rocks and shoals.

Long before the lumbering caravel had reached the mouth of the great river more than one seaman there had expressed a wish to sail with him into the mysterious and unknown seas of the West.

Columbus was only too ready to accept the services of volunteers for his great and daring expedition. He had watched the men at work, and knew well what each could do. But two of these had particularly attracted his attention, and he questioned them carefully concerning their antecedents.

Both were young, neither perhaps much over twenty years of age. Neither looked like Spaniards, though both talked the language well. But they kept together while at work or while idling, and they addressed each other in a tongue that certainly was very far from being Castilian.

"I would speak with those two men," said Columbus to the ship's master.

"You will do them the highest honour," replied the captain, "for both desire to partake of your fortunes be they good or evil."

"Bring them hither."

One was a tall, soldierly-looking young fellow with blue eyes, and fair hair that clustered over his brows and neck in a truly rebellious manner. His face was beaming with good-nature, but bronzed to redness as if he had seen much service by sea and land, young though he was. The other was of shorter stature, with a wealth of auburn hair, a merrier face than even his companion, and eyes around which genuine mirth seemed to lurk like a wild-cat under a hedge ready for a spring. Nor did it take much to cause this youth to break into a ripple of right merry laughing. Even as he stood before Columbus now he appeared ready to smile with the least encouragement.

"Alard, lad," he said in a kind of aside to his companion

and in English, "I can't keep it up for the life of me. The truth is so much easier."

"Very well, Will," was the reply.

"I have seen your face before," said Columbus to Will, addressing him in Spanish.

"Ah! then, señor, the cat has jumped right out of the bag, and indeed you have seen both of us at Granada."

"You were soldiers there?"

"Soldiers both. And fought against the Moors, the villains."

"Good! But you are not Spaniards?"

"Alard is Spanish by birth, English by parentage. He is the son of a soldier of fortune."

"And you?"

"Well, I am not a Spaniard quite, señor, by reason of the fact that I was born in Galway."

"In Greece, boy?"

"It might be there too, señor; but indeed it is in Ireland."

"But when came you here, and why?" asked Columbus.

"Indeed, your highness, it is almost too long and trifling a story to tell you. I'm two-and-twenty, your highness, and just four years ago I fell in love with the sweetest girl in Ireland, Bridget Malony. But she was full of mischief and fun and was breaking my heart, and so I ran off to sea, leaving mother and sisters and the sow and all. I wanted to be drowned. But the sea would not drown me. I thought, as a soldier, I should be sure to be shot or killed by the Moors. But, lo! your highness, though I killed many a Moslim, never one of them had the grace to return the favour. That is all my story."

"Tell mine too," said Alard in English.

"This boy is only twenty, but, poor lad, he is in the same sack as myself. He loves a Spanish lass, and two

weeks ago at Granada she refused to dance with him: so we have both run away. We have been friends together for three years and over, and oh, if you please, señor, we want both of us to sail with you, so that we shall never see our false loves, nor our countries any more."

"But enjoy a bit of fighting," said Alard. "Put that in, Will."

"But enjoy a bit of fighting, señor."

Columbus laughed heartily.

"Oh!" he replied, "but you are deserters both, and deserve to be punished."

"No, indeed, if you please, señor, we have not deserted."

"No? But you have just said you ran away."

"Yes, that is true. We ran away from our lady-loves, both Alard and myself. But the captain will tell you we have been honourably discharged at the close of the siege from the king's army."

Columbus turned to the ship-master.

"That is true, señor," said the latter, "else would I not have shipped them on board my caravel."

"Well," said Columbus after a pause for consideration, "I shall accept you as volunteers. But mind this," he added smiling, "I shall bring you both safely back again; and who knows but that your faithless loves may again smile upon you, and the end be better than the beginning."

. . . . . .

When Christopher arrived once more at the gates of La Rabida, and once more embraced his son and Marchena, he seemed a changed being. He was always a man of lofty mien, but now he looked positively noble. He was happier in face and eye, and straighter in carriage. A burden of almost twenty years appeared to have fallen from his shoulders. When he talked his very voice seemed stronger, more musical, and altogether more cheerful.

He brought good news to little Diego, for by an *albalá* from the queen he was already appointed one of the pages to the young prince Juan.

"Oh, father!" said the boy when he heard this, "I am much pleased and grateful, but I would rather sail with you."

"Sail with Fortune, dear Diego," said Columbus, "wherever she leads you. But if Heaven graciously continues to favour your father he promises you now that he will one day make you a commander in some of the islands which he is going to discover."

Columbus for the next four or five months led a very active life indeed. His fleet had to be got ready for sea, manned, officered, armed, and provisioned.

To an old sailor like our hero getting ships ready for sea would have presented no difficulty, had those vessels been bound for some well-known port, or even to sail southwards along the African shores as far as the recently discovered Cape of Good Hope But Columbus was going to tempt Providence and Fate, so it seemed to almost everyone. Such service was desperate in the extreme, and the hardiest and most daring sailors held aloof therefrom.

Nothing daunted, however, brave Cristoval Colon—for so the Spaniards named him—worked hard to get his crews together. Nor did he accept the services of all who came promiscuously, else would he have ended in having around him as pretty a set of fellows as ever plundered a ship or murdered a crew.

The port of Palos was not a large one, yet in some way or another the inhabitants had given offence to the throne, and they were now to feel the effects of their folly.

On the 23d of May, a never-to-be-forgotten day in Palos, crowds might have been seen wending their way to the old church that stands on the hill outside the village, for here

the venerable Juan Perez was not only to hold service, but to read a proclamation.

This was read in the porch by a public servant of the crown, and it did set forth and command that within ten days from that date Palos was to furnish ready for sea two strong and large caravels and to place them at the disposal of Cristoval Colon. Cristoval himself was to have the option of choosing and fitting out a third ship for his cruise. The crews of these vessels which at the time of their being chosen happened to belong to them were not, however, compelled to enter for service, but those who did were to receive no more than the ordinary wages of seamen, and were to submit themselves in every way to the authority of the Admiral of the Ocean.

At the same time those who inhabited towns and villages on the sea-shore around were commanded to send supplies to Cristoval for his ships, whatsoever he should need or demand, and these were to be paid for only at the ordinary market rates.

Notwithstanding the tenor of this proclamation, several weeks elapsed, and nothing was done in the way of providing ships, so great was the disinclination of the people to have anything to do with what they deemed so mad an enterprise. It seemed to many of them that the crews of the ships chosen would not only sail away to destruction, but would in reality enter the gates of the eternal without tasting of death.

And now an officer of the queen's household was sent down to enforce compliance with the proclamation under the severest penalties. But this even had not the desired effect. The town was crowded with strangers who had come pouring in from all directions, and riots and tumults, with loss of life, were the only effects of the attempt to compel the inhabitants to produce the caravels.

It was just at this juncture that the Pinzon family, the richest and most enterprising in that part of Spain, threw in their lot with Columbus. They were a firm of three brothers, and after they had joined the standard of our mariner things went on swimmingly. Not only were the two caravels forthcoming, but provisions and men as well.

Furthermore, a third and much larger vessel was secured, and many of the Pinzons' relatives and friends now began to assist the Admiral, so that, what with hard work and proper management, the little fleet was almost ready for sea by the end of July.

Not without some most vexatious delays, however, for the two owners of the vessel second in size were in no hurry to go on with the work, and the caulking and pitching was so inadequately performed that Columbus himself ordered the men and their masters to do it all over again. Instead of obeying with any degree of alacrity, many of them deserted at night, while the owners themselves seemed untiring in their efforts to keep matters back. There is no doubt these cowardly fellows were of opinion that if the caravel was found unseaworthy she would be condemned, and another belonging to someone else requisitioned to supply her place.

But Columbus knew well what he was about, and he knew, too, that the *Pinta*—for that was her name—was one of the fastest sailing caravels under a spread of lateen sail that ever left the port of Palos. The names of the owners of the *Pinta* were Gomez Rascon and Cristoval Quintero.

It is unlikely that my readers will trouble themselves to remember these names. The family name, however, of the first sounds very like "rascal," and a rascal I have no hesitation in saying he was in every signification of the word.

Now the fame of the enterprise had already been rumoured abroad, and many daring adventurers sought service under the Admiral of the Ocean. As I have already said, he would

have found little difficulty in filling up his ships with pirates and cut-throats, who would probably have risen in mutiny before the vessels were many days at sea, and after disposing of the officers in the speediest way that suggested itself, turned the ships into corsairs.

When one thinks of the vastness of Christopher Columbus's undertaking, one cannot help wondering at the apparent inadequateness of his fleet.

Just think of it. The Admiral's own vessel, the *Santa Maria*, the largest of the three, was but a ship of one hundred tons burden, and her crew, all told, numbered little over fifty! She was in reality a ship or barque, of fair size for those days, and was in every respect—at the time she sailed—completely seaworthy. The sail she carried was as follows: On her foremast she had a large square foresail, and she also carried a sprit-sail; on the main-mast a large main-sail and a main-topsail. But the mizzen was rigged lateen-fashion, and that is the reason I call her a barque. She had a very high poop, as was the custom on ships of war in those old days, and here was the saloon or officers' mess-place, the Admiral's quarters, and also quarters for most of the officers. Other officers lived forward in the high forecastle, while the crew bunked between-decks or spread their mats on the bare deck and in corners.

So far so good. But the *Pinta* was but a caravel, and not decked over amidships, though both fore and aft she had high and comfortable quarters for her officers and crew. She was only fifty tons burden! and at the time she sailed was lateen-rigged. Her crew, all told, consisted of but a score of men and officers. The *Niña* was still smaller, although her crew was the same in number, for she was but forty tons burden, and she also was lateen-rigged.

Now both these caravels that were to cross the wide Atlantic Ocean and brave all kinds of danger, of which before sailing

they could really form no conception, were in reality no larger than a couple of Peterhead herring-boats. Scotch fishermen are certainly brave, but I do not hesitate to say that they would hang fire, if asked to sail betwixt Glasgow and New York in the biggest and best of their semi-open boats. We must not forget, however, that the hardy Norsemen of old ventured to scour the stormy ocean in craft very much similar to those. And I myself have forgathered with seamen—walrus-hunters—in the grim Arctic Ocean, who had crossed from Norway to follow their calling in vessels no stronger or larger than the caravels of Columbus, and very much of the same build, although not so high either forward or aft.

But the Admiral knew best, after all. He knew that he should have to sail over shoal water in and around the islands he might discover, and also to ascend rivers, and that large vessels would be of little use for work such as that.

The brothers Pinzon, who had lent themselves hand and heart to the service of Columbus, were placed in charge of the caravels, Martin being captain of the *Pinta*, with Francisco under him as master, and the third brother, Vicente, captain of the *Niña*.

The two rascally owners of the *Pinta*, Rascon and Quintero, went on board as able seamen. Probably their craft was dearer to them than life itself, and they begged to be taken. If they did so, Columbus, no doubt, thought himself bound by honour to take them, but had I—or you, reader—been asked our advice, it would have been given in very few words—"Leave them at home."

"We shall not be separated, shall we, señor?" said William Ires to Columbus one day.

The Admiral smiled as he returned the man's salute.

"You mean Alard and yourself?"

"That is it, Admiral."

"No, my good fellow. I will that you be together, and both on my own ship."

The man saluted the Admiral once more and retired.

In addition to what I have called the "crews of the three vessels all told," by which I mean men and officers actually engaged in the working of the ship, there were several who might have been ranked as only passengers, and had shipped under Columbus for the sake of adventure, and others again were officers specially appointed by the crown. Among this latter we find Roderigo de Escobedo ranked as inspector-general, and Diego de Arana, a magistrate or master-at-arms. This gentleman was one of the dearest friends Columbus had, and nearly related to his wife Beatriz. There were also three pilots and a physician and surgeon. Counting all, as nearly as may be reckoned with surety, there were less than one hundred and ten who actually left with Columbus to unveil the mysteries of the unknown sea.

Christopher Columbus had bidden farewell to his weeping wife and his son Diego, and the little fleet was unmoored and drawn out into the river, where anchor was cast for the night. Then, and not till then, did the Admiral revisit the convent of La Rabida to bid good-bye to his friend Marchena, and to receive the sacrament of the church.

There were tears in the eyes of the venerable friar, Juan Perez, that night as he gave Columbus his blessing.

"Good-bye, my son," he said; "fare thee well. I may not live to see you return, but the blessing of God and the church be on you and yours, and may Our Lady of La Rabida be ever near you to guide you in all your goings. *Vale! Vale!* Amen."

CHAPTER II.

BREAKDOWN OF THE "PINTA."

VERY early next morning, August the third—so early indeed that the sun had not yet arisen, nor had the gray mists lifted themselves from the hills,—Columbus tripped anchor and dropped down the river. Not too early, however, to prevent hundreds of the weeping relatives of those on board from congregating on the banks of the stream, that they might wave them one last farewell—a farewell that they deemed an eternal one. And hardly was there a seaman on board either the ship or caravel, probably, who did not think he was now looking for the last time on his friends and fatherland.

All the way down the river did the crowd follow, and not until the vessels had crossed the bar of Saltes and stood southwards and west, across the Gulf of Cadiz—not, indeed, before the barks of these bold mariners were seen on the dim horizon like larks against a summer's sky—did the sorrowing friends slowly leave the beach, turning again and again to gaze once more and waft blessings and prayers after the fast-receding sails.

> "They looked at the barks with the breezes that swung
> Away o'er the sea like birds on the main,
> And aye as they lessened they sighed or they sung
> Farewell to the friends we shall ne'er see again."

. . . . . .

The wind, that was blowing off the land when the ships left the shore, freshened as the day advanced and as they got further out to sea. The three vessels were now somewhat far apart, the *Pinta* leading and the *Niña* following up last.

Studding-sails were accordingly set on board the *Santa Maria*, or, to speak more correctly, extra canvas attached to the square sails, and representing our modern stu'n'sail.

The extra spread of cloth soon began to tell, and she began to gain on the *Pinta* hand over hand, and was shortly on her lee beam. The caravel was not only a faster craft but could sail closer to the wind than the flagship, whose yards could not be brought so well up, or fore and aft. But to pass the *Pinta* was not the Admiral's intention, though he had very good reason for not getting too far away from her. One of the studding-sails was therefore lowered, and it was now found that both craft kept well together.

As the day advanced the land grew more and more indistinct. For a long time the green of the hills and the dark shapes of the rocks and cliffs could be seen, but soon the latter sank or became merged into the haze that covered all, and the mountains were now visible only as a gray cloud far away on the horizon.

The men still stood together in groups on the forecastle or in the ships' waist, leaning over the bulwarks, talking but little, only gazing dismally at the dark surging water that went swirling and bubbling away astern. Many of them had never seen such deep blue water before, and their hearts sank as they looked at it. Some of them would rather have turned their glances in another direction, but there was a kind of dismal fascination in the dark, mysterious sea that held them almost spell-bound.

The ocean seemed so very deep, so very black and unfathomable. They shuddered to think of what might dwell down there, and more than once Juan Pedro, who was the quintessence of hideous superstitions, declared he could see strange writhing monsters with awful faces glide past the vessel.

Galway Will and his English friend was passing a group

of Spaniards, when he heard Juan Pedro make some of his dismal remarks to his shipmates. Will was humming an old Irish air to himself, and did not look at all unhappy. Indeed he and Alard were the only men forward who exhibited any signs of cheerfulness.

The two stopped as Juan Pedro spoke, and Will, assuming a look of intense and sorrowful sympathy, addressed Pedro:

"What is it, Jack?" he said in Spanish. "Been crying, poor boy? Thinking about his grandmother that he has left behind? Poor Jack! But here is a bosom that you can lay your head upon, Jack. Here is a heart that will sympathize with you—and it belongs to Galway Will. I too, Jack, have left behind a grandmother who loved me, and a sow, besides, that adored me, to say nothing of a sister, and as pretty a lass as ever laughed at a lover. There now, Jack, do not look as if you wanted to cry again. Dry your red eyes, Jack, and—hark!"

It was the dinner-bell, and Alard and Will, both as hungry as hunters, went scurrying away to their mess between decks, and soon after Juan and five of his companions joined them.

Very solid and substantial was the meal they sat down to. The old-fashioned sea-biscuits of the navy were substantial in those days—so, I presume, were the weevils which they, no doubt, contained. But here on this rude table was both pork and beef, well boiled with a soup of vegetables, and also loaves of coarse yellow bread. The whole could be washed down with a draught of red wine.

The dinner had a wonderful effect on the spirits of Will's messmates. Even red-eyed Juan began to brighten up a little, and he was once seen to smile at one of the Irishman's sallies of wit.

"May the blessing of Heaven be around us, and Our Lady come all the way with us to the back of the Western Sea!" said Galway Will, as he drained a bumper. He replaced

the flagon on the table with a bang that made the iron platters ring.

"Phaugh!" cried Will, "that is not the sort of drink at all to make men of us. Ah, Jack! my chicken-hearted boy, if you were but once to taste the wine of my beautiful country—it is photteen they call it—you would sail the seas as merry as I do, and think no more of your grandmother and the girl you leave in old Castile."

"It is *aguardiénte*, is it not?" said Juan.

"Hurrah!" cried Will; "Jack has spoken! Jack is getting better. Now we shall all be as merry and happy as priests and princes. Alard, I toast you in a bumper; and long may the wine last—sour though it be. Join us, Jack. Let us be a junta—a jolly junta—and we will mourn no more for the land that gave us birth till we return from off the ocean wide, with our purses filled with pearls and our pockets crammed with gold. Hallo! here is an officer."

"Do not get up men," said the new-comer; "I am only the junior surgeon, sent by his highness the Admiral to inquire if you have anything to say or complain of."

"Doctor Juan Señor," said Galway Will, with one of his most insinuating smiles, "I know that such a clever man as yourself can speak the language of the Engleese better than myself, who has only spent a year or two in London."

The doctor bowed low.

"And so I am addressing you in the Saxon, though the tongue of the Gael is easier to wag."

"My Engleese is but imperfect," said the young surgeon.

"It is truly beautiful, doctor dear. But give our united love to the great Admiral, and say that everything in the mess is better than the other, and there's small reason to complain of anything but the wine, and that one mouthful of photteen would be worth a bucket of it."

The doctor promised to make the report, bowed, and

went on his way. But it is very doubtful if ever he presented Galway Will's message to the Admiral.

There is this to be said, however, in favour of both Will and the Saxon Alard, they were redeeming features in the midst of a crew that from the very commencement promised to be far too dolorous and doubting. Will's cheerful smile and ready wit often changed topics that were being discussed from grave to gay, and Alard's excellent training and discipline, and his constant readiness to work cheerfully and with a will, soon made him a general favourite, not only forward around the forecastle, but among the officers aft as well.

The first day at sea wore slowly to a close. Without increasing to anything like even half a gale of wind the breeze kept steadily on, and when the sun went down in a cloudless sky the *Santa Maria* was gently rising and falling, swaying and dipping to every passing wave. So quietly did she sail that she seemed to have gone asleep on the heaving breast of the great ocean.

After prayers and evening quarters the ship's company was dismissed, and the Admiral with some of his chief officers, among them Cosa the master, Ruiz the pilot, and his friend Diego de Arana, assembled in the chief poop cabin, and Columbus brought out his charts and maps, which with a pleased smile he spread upon the table.

"This," he said, "is the chart of Toscanelli, and this is one of my own, in which I have ventured to make some alterations—I dare say I ought not to say improvements—on that of my learned correspondent.

"Here," he continued, "is the point where we now lie. Southwards and west if you cast your eye you will find the Canaries. Yes, there they are, my good Ruiz. It is not my intention to go farther south than these, but to strike directly west till we reach—"

"What?" said Diego.

"Ah! my good friend, God and our Lady alone know what. But come, we have no reason to be gloomy. We are now at sea, the night is fine, the sun has set as it used to when I was a boy, in a glory of the deepest orange and gold. That I look upon as a good omen. Then, but this minute I saw a white-winged bird fly round our ship, and thrice it screamed—but in nowise a melancholy way. It seemed to me that bird was a spirit—with all reverence be it spoken—calling to us to be of good cheer and bidding us farewell."

He paused for a moment.

"I am full of faith and hope to-night, friends mine," he continued. "I argue you thus: Through much tribulation and sorrow our Father which is in Heaven has guided me all my life. Doubtless the spirit of evil has fought hard to deter the fulfilment of my great plan, which is to bring the two ends of the earth together and carry the cross into the darkest regions here below. But the Father did raise me up friends in high places; and now, oh, now, my friends, we are on the sea! Soon will our prows be pointing to the glorious west. Soon—in a few brief weeks, perhaps—shall my task be concluded."

The Admiral strode rapidly up and down the deck for some minutes.

"Friends," he cried exultingly, as he turned once more towards them, "I can hardly believe it is true! I feel I could raise my voice and cry aloud in song to the Great Being who has permitted us to commence our voyage under circumstances so auspicious. Take courage, men; take courage. We will not be deserted!"

"But trouble we may expect," said Diego de Arana.

"True, true. We are born to it, even as the sparks fly upwards."

"To speak with candour, Cristoval, I like not one or two of the men in our own crew, nor those fellows in the *Pinta*, who would do our expedition an injury if they could."

"There are two ways of conquering these discontented spirits," said Columbus. "One is by firmness—watchful firmness—and kindness."

"Yes, my friend. And the other?"

"By death."

"Ah, good, Admiral!" said Cosa, the master, who was also owner of the *Santa Maria*. "Very good indeed! But the worst of it is a man is of so little use after strangling that as a rule the operation is better left unperformed. Besides, Admiral, if you begin to hang your owners, why, then, my own neck would feel most insecure, and I should dream every night that I was dangling from the yard-arm."

"Nay, nay, dear Cosa, you are far too faithful to need correction of that extreme kind. But come, let us banish all such gloomy thoughts. Steward, bring in the wine and the loaf. The night air makes one hungry."

"Now, friends, day by day as we go on I shall take and mark the reckoning on this chart. I shall also keep a log that all may see. My own private journals must, however, be sacred to the queen, the king, and myself. Is this not right?"

"Yes, yes, señor."

"Now"—here Columbus once more pointed to the chart—"as soon as we leave the Canary Islands here, we shall steer for St. Brandon."

"If we can find it," said Ruiz.

"Or the Antilles."

"Another fable, perhaps."

"So I myself think, friend Ruiz. Then no land may gladden our eyes until we reach the far-famed shores of the Isles of Cipango. And these, my friends—if what Marco

Polo tells us can be trusted—lie four hundred leagues[1] from the shores of India."

"But," said Ruiz, "having reached so far as Cipango our greatest difficulties will have been vanquished."

"So please our Lady, yes," said the Admiral reverently.

The conversation now became general, and presently the evening meal was announced, which being discussed, new watches were set, and the Admiral retired to his cabin. Not to sleep though. His mind was far too uneasy as yet to permit much refreshing slumber. For many men among his crews had been enforced, and there was no saying when these might incite the others to open mutiny.

The night passed away in peace, however, and Columbus, on going early on deck, was glad to see that the vessels were still holding their course, that the wind was steady, and the crew of his own ship exhibiting far more alacrity and courage.

Nothing happened worthy of record for a day or two, except the freshening of the wind towards nightfall on the 5th, which necessitated the taking in of sail, after which the *Santa Maria* rolled far less, and things on board were generally more comfortable.

The wind was still fair, however, being considerably on the larboard beam, or perhaps a few points abaft thereof.

Just before turning in for the night, the Admiral walked for some time with his friend Diego, talking more of home this evening than of the glory of future discoveries.

"I have nothing on my mind," said Columbus, "as regards my wife and children. I have the utmost faith in dear Beatriz, and God will protect them all. How bright and happy my lad looked when I informed him that he was appointed page! Yet, rather would he have come with me."

[1] The league reckoned by Columbus was about four English miles.

"And how handsome he will look in court dress!"

"Oh, the boy can carry himself in quite a cavalierly fashion, I assure you."

"Ha, ha! Yes, and methinks a boy who has no pride of self can never make good headway through the troublous seas of life."

"But see, Diego. Hath not the *Pinta* dropped rather far astern?"

"I think," said Ruiz, coming up at this moment, "that we now carry too much canvas. Our great square sails tell, Señor Admiral, in such a breeze as this."

"Well, Ruiz, as it is your watch, I would have you shorten sail if there be much chance of getting too far ahead. Tell Cosa this when he comes to relieve you. Good-night. The peace of our Lady be with us."

. . . . .

The *Santa Maria* rolled heavily all night long, for the wind caught the high poop and heeled her over ever and anon, as she breasted the heavy seas. Sometimes, indeed, she appeared to be almost on her beam-ends, with the points of her yards near to the surface of the stormy sea. But she slowly righted again, showing that she was a vessel of good stability and strength, and that she was well ballasted.

As usual, Columbus, who was not a very good sleeper, lay long awake thinking. But the rocking of the ship sent him off at last, and he slumbered soundly enough.

About daybreak next morning he was awakened by the steward, who placed a hand gently on his shoulder.

He had been dreaming that he was sailing on the Bay of Genoa with his old boatman friend Diego, and Giacomo. A very happy kind of dream. But he started up when Pedro touched his arm, and was instantly wide enough awake to receive Ruiz, and to hear news that was not over-pleasant.

"The *Pinta* making signs of distress, is she, good Ruiz?"

"Yes, Señor Admiral."

"Where lies she?"

"Some distance astern, and down to leeward, señor."

"Still under correct sail?"

"Yes, but yawing about and apparently ungovernable."

"Put about, Ruiz, at once. We will run down towards her and hail her. Have arms ready and the guns loaded. Peradventure this may mean mutiny."

In a very few minutes Columbus was himself on deck.

The *Santa Maria*, amidst much bustle and noise, had now been got round, and was rapidly nearing the *Pinta* on the starboard tack.

Immediately she got abreast of her the foresail was backed and way all but stopped.

The Admiral himself now hailed Captain Pinzon, whom he could see on the poop.

"Anything serious the matter?"

"Rudder unshipped and partially broken, Don Admiral."

"What have you done, Captain Pinzon?"

"Rigged a temporary rudder by lashing spars and oars together. I believe the damage to the rudder can be repaired in a few hours."

"Very good! We will lie by you until you report all safe."

Signals were made to the *Niña*, and presently she also lay safely not far off.

And now the Admiral once more hailed the *Pinta*.

Pinzon himself answered the hail.

"Any reason to suspect treason, Captain Pinzon?"

"Very much, Admiral."

"On whose shoulders would rest the guilt, if guilt there be?"

"On those of Rascon and Quintero."

"Put both in chains."

"Yes, señor."

So handily and well, however, did Pinzon and his men work, that the rudder was soon repaired and reshipped; but the *Pinta* was leaking somewhat, and she had shipped a deal of water, so that the Admiral thought it best to run for the Grand Canary. They reached this island on the 9th of August, and, finding shelter, proceeded at once to make good the repairs.

Not only were days spent in caulking, and the rudder completely repaired, but the sails of the vessel were altered from lateen rig to square.

Meanwhile a kind of drum-head court-martial was held upon Rascon and his companion. Nothing, however, was proved to directly implicate them in the damaging of the rudder, and they were permitted to go again on duty with a solemn warning that they would be under suspicion, and if found guilty of either insubordination or interfering with the *Pinta's* sailing their lives would be forfeited to the queen.

So unseaworthy, indeed, did the *Pinta* seem for a time before the repairs were completed, that the Admiral tried, but tried in vain, to find another caravel to replace her.

In order to have all the vessels of somewhat the same appearance, the sails of the *Niña* were also altered. Columbus's little fleet was now square-rigged throughout.

But all this work occupied weeks, and they were still lying at one of the most westerly of the Canary Islands, namely Gomera, taking in provisions, water, and wood, when the arrival of a vessel from Ferro brought tidings that caused the Admiral to expedite the work considerably in order to get away to sea.

Three armed or fighting caravels had been seen off Ferro. They carried the Portuguese flag, and were evidently on the

outlook for ships of some kind, and with warlike intentions.

Columbus, whether rightly or wrongly I am unable to say, came at once to the conclusion that these Portuguese men-of-war had been sent by their king to capture or destroy his little fleet, either from spite or pique, because his hereditary enemies, the Spaniards, had fitted it out, and would reap all the fruits of any discoveries that might be made.

General consternation now prevailed among the officers and crews, for they were in no wise prepared to do battle with armed caravels.

CHAPTER III.

A FEARFUL AND A GHASTLY LIGHT.

THE anxiety not only of Columbus himself, but also of his officers, especially the brothers Pinzon, to prosecute the voyage, was now very great, and as soon as the water and stores were got on board, anchors were weighed and the ships left Gomera.

This was early on the morning of the sixth of September.

As the day went on, the breeze died away even before they were out of sight of land, and all night long the fleet lay becalmed,

> "As idle as a painted ship,
> Upon a painted ocean."

All night long and for three days and nights more the vessels hardly ever moved from their position, except in so far as they were impelled by the ebb and flow of the tide, or the send of the ocean current.

It was an anxious time indeed for Columbus, and many a glance did he cast around him, wishing, praying for a cloud to arise on the great blue vault of heaven, or for a cat's-paw, even the slightest, to ripple the water.

Oftentimes, too, did he turn his eyes anxiously eastwards, half-expecting to see those Portuguese caravels, with long oars extended, sweep round the distant cliffs.

Every night a most careful watch was set, guns were loaded, and all precautions taken—the three vessels lying as closely together as they could do without danger. For Columbus, if overhauled, was determined to give the piratical caravels a warm reception.

And not a light was permitted to be shown either on deck or below.

But far in the east, night after night, there rose on the horizon a fearful and a ghastly light, for the great mountain of Teneriffe was in full eruption, and belching forth pillars of fire and rolling clouds of luminous smoke.

A terrible fear of some dread impending doom now took possession of the seamen in this little fleet. The impressive stillness of the night, the exceeding brightness of the stars, and the awful silence of the sea, were in themselves enough to have caused alarm and fear in the minds of so superstitious a crew. But that extraordinary appearance on the horizon as soon as darkness fell, was sufficient in itself to daunt the heart of even the bravest.

On the Saturday night it was far worse than ever, and now and again the dread silence of their surroundings would be broken by the sound of muffled explosions and far-off muttering thunder. On that night, too, several very bright meteors were seen.

Things reached a crisis shortly before day-dawn, and a deputation from the more timid of the crew rushed aft and demanded audience of the Admiral.

Columbus was already awake, and listened patiently to all they had to say.

"Take us back, take us back!" they cried again and again. "Take us home, for we have incurred the deep displeasure of Heaven and no good thing can befall us."

"Behold!" said Columbus, "the day begins to break. Come again when the sun peeps over the horizon and I will give you my reply."

Columbus did not wait for their returning of their own free-will, however. The daylight had probably in a great measure allayed their fears, and they dreaded ridicule. So immediately after breakfast the bell rang for prayers.

No more impressive sermon, perhaps, was ever preached than that of Columbus on the morning of this still and hallowed Sabbath-day, and certainly no preacher had ever a more attentive audience.

The crew were gathered together aft, just under the poop, and there in the midst of them stood the Admiral, his officers near to him. His head was bared, his gray hair floating over his shoulders, his bold, bronzed, and handsome face upturned to the morning sky.

His language was simple in the extreme; he spoke to them, indeed, as a father might speak to his children, and he gently chided their want of faith, while he endeavoured to describe to them in words freed from every technicality, and even the phraseology of the sea—for amongst his listeners were landsmen as well as sailors—the physical formation of the great world on which they were sailing; he reminded them that it had been proved not to be a flat surface, as the older philosophers had believed it to be, and in proof of this he pointed out to them how islands and lands from which they were sailing gradually disappeared beneath the horizon, and islands they were approaching appeared in view with their mountain tops first; he explained to them

the rising and setting of the sun and moon and stars as they actually occurred, the motion that brought them into view or lost them for a time to sight being in the earth itself; he showed them the compass, and explained its action as well as he could; he showed them his charts, pointing out to them the very islands to which they were sailing, and dilating on all the beauties and wonders they should see; the more sordid object of gain to themselves or their country, he said, by increase of riches, however, must sink into insignificance before the glorious thought that, humble as they were, to them was to be accorded the proud privilege of carrying the glad tidings of the gospel into far-off heathen lands, so that the glory of our Saviour should cover the whole world as with a garment of light and beauty.

They had been in fear and in trembling on the previous night, he said, because they had seen a burning mountain, but these were common all over the world, and even nearer home they had Etna and Vesuvius. They were bound to see many wonders as they came into new lands, but all the phenomena in the universe were capable of being explained now, or would be in years to come, by well-known laws. God moved in a mysterious way in performing his wonders, and even if these mysteries could not always be fathomed, it was because they were the secrets of nature and of nature's God, in whose good hands they all were.

Before the Admiral had commenced his address, silence almost unbroken had reigned all about and on board the vessel. There was only the gentle whispering of the water under the ship's sides as she rose and fell in the swell, only the occasional flap of sail or rattle of block, only the voices of the sea-birds; but even while he was yet speaking the wind came sighing through the cordage, and the sails began to lift and fill. The rudder hinges creaked, the sheets tightened, and the vessel began to forge through the water

"Behold!" cried Columbus, "Heaven hath heard my prayers, and our voyage is indeed begun.

"Now may the blessing of God be with us, and may our Lady watch over us from this hour. Amen!"

Not a head there that was not bent low, as the Admiral finished his address; not a voice that did not respond to his solemn "Amen!"

CHAPTER IV.

MYSTERY AND TERROR.

BY the time the sun began to near the horizon that day, the sky being still very clear and bright, land was no longer visible even from the maintop. Nor was there any sign of pursuing caravels. So Columbus soon called aft his crew to vespers, and once more he stood in the midst of them, calm now and smiling. Happy to all appearance, for he was far too wise to let his people perceive that there was aught save joy at his heart. He thanked Heaven aloud that they had been permitted to commence the voyage under such favouring auspices. Then he addressed a few words to his crew, telling them to be of good cheer, and in a few weeks' time at most they would be among the islands of the Indian Ocean, where joys awaited them such as they could not at present even conceive of.

The Admiral talked almost lightly now, as if he quite took for granted that his people had abandoned all their foolish fears and were looking forward to the future as hopefully and joyfully as even he himself was. He could not help perceiving, however, that there was more than one sad face among the crew, and more than one pair of eyes red and

swollen with tears. The only really bright faces, indeed, were those of Alard and Galway Will.

Columbus called these two men aside some time after this, under the plea of issuing orders of a sanitary nature. He looked narrowly first at Will then at Alard, and as he did so he smiled.

"What!" he said, "I cannot perceive from your faces that you have been weeping."

"Weeping, señor," said Will. "I did all my weeping before I left Ireland. No, Admiral, a woman is not worth weeping for."

"Ah! but I was not thinking of your lady-loves. Are you not afraid to leave the land, afraid of your lives in sailing with me thus over unknown seas, into the regions of mystery and, mayhap, gloom?"

"No, Don," said Will. "We are going to take our bearings from our brave Admiral. As soon as he begins to weep so will Galway Will and bold English Alard."

"Bravo! spoken like men. Thank you, too, for the hint. I shall assuredly keep a smiling face, because my trust is in God, and our Lady is our guide. But to you I look to do all in your power to keep the crew in good cheer. I can trust you."

"We shall be as true as the needle to the pole-star. We shall not lose heart till that points the other way."

"Again I thank you," said Columbus; "and now go to your duty."

"Strange it is," continued the Admiral to his friend de Arana, who had just come from the saloon; "strange, is it not, Diego, that the only two really brave men of my crew should be foreigners! But come with me, cousin, I would speak with you in private."

The Admiral led the way to his own cabin, and here he opened a drawer.

"The secret I am about to tell you," he said, "must be strictly guarded. It is one I do not feel justified in keeping from you, my cousin and friend."

There was an emphasis placed upon the word friend that had a world of meaning in it, and Diego de Arana held out his hand.

Eye met eye as hand clasped hand and the compact of secrecy was sealed.

"It is after all no real deceit I desire to practise," said Columbus, "but simply tact (*jutcio*). You can see for yourself, my friend and brother, how intense is the sorrow of my people at leaving their native land. It is a sorrow that seems to have in it not one ray of hope; one and all they appear to think they are already under the shadow of death. It is ever, my good Diego, the unknown that is the most terrible to all of us. But I wish to reduce this terror that has taken possession of my crew to a minimum. Consequently I shall not permit them to know how far each day we sail. The log, therefore, Diego, that I place for their inspection will not give our actual distance from Europa, but a much shorter one. The real log, brother, is here in this drawer, and at any time you may see it, and often I trust we shall confer together in private."

"I thank you, brother," said Diego, "for this confidence. I need not say it shall repose in my breast alone."

"And now, Diego, I am going to ask one other favour of you. Before darkness sets in quite I wish you to visit the *Pinta* and *Niña*. They are both close aboard of us. I have here addresses which I wish you to carry with my loving regards to Captains Martin and Vicente Pinzon of the caravels. They are to be read to-morrow morning to each crew, and I trust will go far to awaken the courage of the men, and dissipate their gloomy fears and forebodings.

"I have also instructions for my captains in the event of

our losing each other. You can read that my orders are in such a case that they voyage no farther than seven hundred leagues, for at this latitude I confidently expect to fall in with land."

There was a knock at the door at this moment, and Maéstre Diego the boatswain entered and announced that foreyards were hauled aback, and the boat lowered and waiting.

So away at once went Diego de Arana to obey the orders of Columbus.

His face was a welcome one on board the other vessels, where he found the men in a state of far greater grief than even the crew of the *Santa Maria*, for on the flagship the presence of Columbus himself no doubt tended in a high degree to keep the seamen in better spirits.

Night had almost fallen, and stars were already shining in the east, before D'Arana's boat once more got alongside. He leapt cheerfully on board, and went at once to report himself to his commander.

Nothing happened to excite the feelings of the crew further until the eleventh of September, when there was a hail from Alard, who was on the outlook in the bows.

"Something dark in the water ahead!"

"What does it look like?" shouted Cosa, who was on duty.

"Cannot see it right, señor. It looks like a great fish or huge serpent."

Galway Will was by Alard's side next moment, and so were several of the crew, among them the young Spanish sailor whom Will styled "Red-eyed Jack." He was pale with fright, and his eyes were as large and round as Spanish ducats, and pretty much the same colour, for Juan was very bilious.

"Ho! ho!" laughed Galway Will, "he has found you out

at last, Jack. He is coming straight to the ship to swallow you up."

"Who? what?" gasped Juan.

"Why the mighty serpent of the unknown sea. There he comes. Look, *Bóbo*, look! See his mouth and his awful eyes!"

Juan utter a frightened, nightmarish kind of scream, but Galway Will held him as in a vice with his head hanging over the bows. Nor did he quit his hold until the great sea-serpent was right under the cowardly fellow's nose, and even he could see that it was only the broken mast or spar of a ship.

"So that is the way," said Alard in English, "you obey the Admiral's orders, Will, and keep up the hearts of the crew. Eh?"

"Some of it is," said Will. "You see, Alard, I want to scare the fright out of this fellow, and I'll scare it out of all the others too, one by one, and make brave men of the whole crew yet."

Alard laughed.

"It's a strange notion, Will, and I do not know how it will act."

"Wait and see."

But even that harmless spar, which, for aught anyone could tell, might have floated out of some harbour, was looked upon as a bad omen by the crew, and their spirits once more fell to zero.

No, not quite to zero.

They reached zero, however, if not a little under the mark, when on the thirteenth day of September a very mysterious occurrence indeed took place, one, too, which for a time quite puzzled the Admiral himself.

The day had gone by cheerfully enough. Galway Will never appeared in better form, and it was recorded by Alard

on that day that Juan Doloroso, or Red-eyed Jack, had been seen to smile. But this happened immediately after dinner had been placed before him, and he had swallowed a cup of red wine. Between you and me and the binnacle, Red-eyed Jack never allowed his grief to interfere with his eating and drinking.

Yes, Galway Will was in good form, and cheering up the crew by bantering them most unmercifully about the severed apron-strings of their aunts and grandmothers they would never be hitched to any more, and the mantillas of the dark-eyed maidens under which they never again should peep.

Well, just after the evening meal, Columbus and Ruiz strolled out to walk the decks and look at the night. It was very clear, and their eyes naturally turned towards the seaman's old friend the pole-star.

Columbus walked towards the compass.

"Why, come hither, Ruiz," he called out a moment after. "This is indeed strange!"

The man who was steering pricked up his ears. Something new and awful was going to happen. Of this he felt assured, for never before had he seen the Admiral look so puzzled.

Ruiz, as he glanced across the needle towards the pole-star, looked even more amazed.

"Why," he cried, "the compass has lost power!"

The man at the wheel groaned.

This recalled Columbus to his senses, and he knew at once he had made a mistake in talking thus before the faint-hearted helmsman.

Every schoolboy knows something nowadays about the variation of the compass, but at this time it was unknown even to Columbus, and certainly to Ruiz. The variation towards the west was even more next day, and the alarm of the crew was very great.

The fear and dread that the compass, by which alone they thought they could trust for guidance in this unknown ocean, had become useless, spread even among the officers aft, and Columbus himself was for a time baffled in his attempts to give any explanation.

But he found a solution at last, and gathered his people once more round him that they might hear his explanation.

"The compass is all right! The compass cannot err!"

These words, spoken in a firm and manly voice, brought comfort and consolation to all.

"The pole-star, however," he went on to say, "like all other stars, has its own movements, and this it is that causes the seeming aberration."

There was no doubt that what he said was true, but it was not the real explanation. It satisfied all, nevertheless, and again things went on as before. Red-eyed Jack continued to weep at intervals, and Galway Will relaxed not his efforts to cheer the crew and keep up their spirits.

It must be confessed that Will's ideas concerning the best method of consoling the seamen were open to a little misconstruction, as an evening in the forecastle cabin would have convinced anybody.

Sailors from all generations have been known as story-tellers, and let us couch it in the more modern phraseology of the sea, and call it spinners of yarns and tellers of very tall tales.

The seamen of the *Santa Maria* were no exception to the rule. Around the galley-fire was not quite the rendezvous of an evening, however, for the sailors in these far-back times, but the mess-place was, and swinging lanterns took the place of a range or stove.

The men of an evening would be gathered in a circle about one of these lanterns. Red-eyed Jack would be there in all his lachrymose glory, and Will and Alard too, if it

did not happen to be their watch on deck. The earnest group, with their fearful faces and glittering eyes, all behind them lying in Rembrandtesque shadow, formed a curious picture enough, and one that would have served as a good study for an artist. It was a somewhat sad picture, though, for with the exception of Alard's handsome visage and Will's semi-comical phiz—(there always did appear to be a little demon of mischief keeping guard in Galway Will's blue eyes)—there was not a countenance in the whole circle that was not strained with terrible interest as they listened to the voice of whomsoever happened to be talking.

The older sailors were the spokesmen as a rule, the mystery and terrors of the ocean their principal theme. Will's plan was to pretend to be as superstitiously frightened as anyone for a time, and immediately afterwards to turn the yarn into ridicule. That was what he called outflanking the long-jawed story-teller.

Many of the yarns related to dreadful monsters that were supposed to inhabit the wide expanse of ocean to the west of the Azores or the lonesome isles of Cape de Verde. Sometimes the relater would aver that he himself had seen these monsters, but more often he but knew a friend who had—a friend whose vessel had been blown many leagues beyond the shores in a storm, and only saved as if by a miracle.

One old man with white hair, wildfire eyes, and thin, sharp face, was perhaps the prince of story-tellers.

"O!" he said, shaking his hoary locks one evening, "if you could have seen what I saw once when lying becalmed in the ocean off the far Azores!" He placed a skinny hand on Red-eyed Jack's knee as he spoke, and a shiver ran through and through the young and superstitious seaman. He dared not ask the old mariner to remove his claw, but all the while the man spoke Jack felt as if nursing a cold and creepy snake.

"We were blown there in a storm. We had no compass, nothing to guide us back. But little did we seem to care. The bitterness of death we thought was surely past. And when the wind went down and it fell a dead calm; when, all day long, the sea looked like oil and there was not a cloud to hide the glaring sun; though the pitch boiled in the deck's seams and we felt almost burned alive, we dreaded the approach of night. There was not a sound either to be heard, except now and then the splash of a great shark in the water as he showed himself for a minute, then sank again into the slimy sea. No one spoke on our decks, and no sound of voices came from the other ship."

"O, Gabriel," cried Red-eyed Jack, "were there two ships?"

"Ay, young friend, two. And as I said, not a voice was heard on the other ship. Her people, we thought, must be dead already, and the vessel was only their floating coffin. But the day went by, the sun dropped down into the waves like a ball of red fire that changed them into blood, then the stars came out, and a half-cleft moon slowly uprose.

"Still no sound from the other ship!

"The moon rose higher and higher, the stars shone clearer and clearer. No one thought of going below that night, for a great fear as if a wizard spell was over us; and though we often gazed towards the silent ship as we leant over the taffrail, no one spoke except in whispers.

"At length, when close upon the midnight hour, we saw a sight that filled us with exceeding great alarm; for a low, frightened moan, not a cry, came over the still, dark water from the sister ship, and on looking in that direction we saw huge pointed arms, as tall as trees, protruding from the sea, waving and tossing around her. At last they wound themselves round the masts. A wild yell of terror now rent the sky; but in a moment more the ship went down, and the cry was drowned in the midnight deep.

"But," continued Gabriel, "much to our joy, a wind now sprang up and increased to a gale—it seemed to come from the west,—and hoisting all sail we ran before it. Two days after our vessel was tossed upon a lonely island beach, and all but I were drowned."

Gabriel did not say how he was brought away from the island, and no one asked. The old man was there in body and in spirit, and that was proof enough that he had been saved.

Of course, Gabriel's story was but a badly-turned version of the fabled sea-monster called the kraken, a gigantic brother to our devil-fish. This creature's favourite pastime, it appears, was to drag down boats and even man-of-war ships, and when it did so no one ever escaped to tell the fearful tale.

Galway Will on this particular occasion felt that his honour was at stake. He did not intend to haul down his flag to this little old man of the sea, called Gabriel; and when he continued to wait in silence as if for the conclusion of the story, Gabriel fidgeted a little under the glance of his keen Irish eyes.

"Is that all?" said Will.

"Was it not a fearful tale?" said Gabriel.

"A very common one, Gabriel. The monster you have described is not a nice one to come across, and yet I have reason to be grateful to it."

All eyes were now turned towards Galway Will.

"Grateful, Guillermo!" cried Gilbert,—"grateful to so awful a monster!"

"Well," said Will, "I fear I must tell you the story.

"It is more than a hundred years ago, and I was then but a young man," he began.

"By our Lady, Guillermo!" cried Gilbert, "do you take us for fools? I am not young, yet can I not remember sixty years ago."

"Keep silence, Gilbert, and interrupt not the discourse of your elders; you are but a boy to me. Long, long since the secret of perpetual youth was given me by a beautiful Indian princess, who lived in fair Cipango, one of the very islands to which this brave ship is now voyaging."

Gabriel seemed to know now that Will's intention was to oust him from his position of story-teller-in-chief, and wisely held his peace; but Juan, he of the dolorous face and swollen eyes, listened with mouth agape to every word that Galway Will said.

"Some day," said the latter, "I may tell you all about the princess, and all about Cipango too; but these matters have nothing to do with the monster, the eight-legged devil of the ocean.

"The story that Gilbert has just told is doubtless true; a mere boy like him could not invent a lie. But the creature he saw was but a pigmy compared to the full-sized monster often to be seen in the far northern seas, where, as a young man, I was wont to sail. In those high latitudes the monsters are called krakens, and often are so large that their bodies outspread cover many acres, while no ship's mast can equal in length the height of their uplifted arms. The creature you saw, my good Gabriel, was but a baby kraken. The babies are sent down to the warm seas around here to spend a few months whenever they seem delicate; and no doubt they amuse themselves by sucking down ships and boats on starlit evenings, to keep them from thinking of their parents at home. This is merely sport and play.

"But, O men, the kraken of the far northern ocean is indeed a fearful monster! If it were not for the fact that he does not appear more than once in seven years, no one would ever venture to go to sea. And when he is known to be abroad and tearing through the ocean, all the ships and boats seek at once a harbour of safety, and never leave

it until the monster retires. You see, Jack, my friend, after a seven years' fast the kraken is very likely hungry, and, not finding anything nice to eat all at once, he sucks down and destroys whole fleets of fishing-boats, unless they can hurry into port, and in that way escape his vengeance.

"And where think you, my sad friend, does this terrible monster sleep when he needs a bit of retirement. You could not guess? Well, I will tell you how I found out.

"I had been engaged in the fisheries of the far north seas, where all the winter long the sun never rises, and the moon and stars never set, and where in summer the sun for ever shines, going round and round in the sky, and never coming to bathe himself in the sea at all.

"Well, it was just at the end of the summer and just before the commencement of the winter. And sometimes the fog and the mist rolled down over us so quickly, that it would be impossible to see the prow of our ship when standing by the rudder arm. And the seas were higher than the top mast, and the cold so intense that the spray driven from their tops was instantly congealed over the rigging and even over the men's coats. At the end of each watch we all looked like gigantic walking icicles, and very glad we were, you may be sure, when the next watch took axes and dug us out of our clothes and let us go to bed.

"Well, my friends, it was just on such a day as I am trying to describe that I fell overboard into the raging sea. The fog was so thick that the vessel disappeared from my view as if the ocean had swallowed her up. She was a very large vessel, near five times as large as this; but had she been ten times as big she could not have saved me. Being an Irish boy, I determined to swim as long as I could, and was just breasting a mighty billow, when right in front of me a huge and terrible head, with an awful hooked nose and eyes that shone like fire, rose near me. I thought my time was come

and I tried to mutter a prayer, and shut my eyes to keep out the vision. While my eyes were still closed, friends, I heard fearful cries, and knew then that what I had seen was the kraken's head, and that what I heard were the death-shouts of my friends as the ship was sucked beneath in the clutches of the kraken.

"I must have fainted and floated long on the top of the water, for when I opened my eyes again the mist was gone, and the sun brightly shining. But I found now that the water about me was strangely agitated, and that I was being whirled round and round a vast pit or whirlpool right in the middle of the sea. I was soon so close that I could see right down its smooth and glassy walls into the black abyss beneath, though it was nearly half a league across. And right down on the rocks at the bottom was the kraken himself, watching me with his terrible eyes. I was swirled round and round the walls of the whirlpool for hours before I reached the bottom; but I had long ere this given myself up for lost. And strange to say the motion was so delightful that I quite enjoyed it. High above me rose the green smooth whirling walls of water, and above these was the blue sky itself, bluer than ever I had seen it. While I was just wondering how long it would be before I reached the bottom, I looked down, and lo!— But shall I tell you the rest, Jack. It won't make you dream, will it?"

"No, no," gasped Juan, the red-eyed. "Go on."

"Well, the kraken was blowing himself up like a mighty balloon, and waving all his eight arms about like squirming snakes, till he seemed to fill the whole whirlpool. Up and up he rose, and up and up I rose with him. I daresay I must have fainted. But when I recovered I found myself on the monster's black and slimy back, and flying through the sea faster than ever clouds flew across the winter sky. I must have ridden hundreds and hundreds of miles on the

monster, and now a green island appeared, and I knew it was Ireland. Luckily I happened to think of a few good words to say, and upon that the kraken disappeared with a bellow and a plunge, and the sweet warm waves threw me up on the yellow sand of the beach, and then I awoke and found myself on bed in mother's cabin in dear Ireland, and Aileen, my sister, bending low over the stir-about pot, and singing to herself the sweetest ever you heard."

"What! Was it a dream then?" cried Jack, relieved and smiling all over.

"I did not say it was a dream. I could not say it was not. But come, Gabriel, tell us one of yours now."

But Gabriel had nothing more to tell that night.

Red-eyed Jack followed Alard and Will to the deck that evening, and after standing quiet and shy for a short time beside the Irishman, he found his voice.

"Of course," he said, "all that you told us about the fearful monsters was not true?"

"Quite as true as any of Gabriel's stories."

"I believe what you say about being very, very old. O, Guillermo, could you tell me how to live and always look young for hundreds of years?"

"Easily," said the Irishman. "Never cry about anything. Always laugh. Keep up your heart, and keep your head up. As long as you do that, you will live and never die."

Jack was silent. Jack was thinking.

CHAPTER V.

A GREEN AND SILENT SEA.

A GENTLE breeze continued to blow and waft the ships of our mariners over a bright and beautiful sea, every wave of which sparkled in the sunshine as if unseen hands were casting diamonds into the water.

All day long fleecy clouds or masses of cumulus lay here and there along the horizon, or long gauzy streaks floated higher up; but at sunset these were lit up in the most marvellous manner with colours far more resplendent than rainbow hues, at which the seamen marvelled very much, but which Columbus pointed out to them as harbingers of good to come.

"Even," he said, "as God placed his bow in the sky to strengthen the hearts of his people and give them the happy assurance that there would be no more floods to drown the world, so are these radiant clouds painted in the golden west to welcome us to the beautiful islands we soon shall see."

The sun burned hot now by day, but oftentimes showers came slowly across the ocean, cooling the air and rendering it fresh and balmy in the extreme. The showers came up with the wind from the east, and could be seen a long way astern, while often the arc of a rainbow shimmered bright against the blue-gray of the cloud.

"It is our Lady herself who comes," Columbus would sometimes say to a seaman as he pointed astern; "behold the beauty of her trailing garments!"

Yet the Admiral had no desire to be understood as talking otherwise than figuratively, though there is no doubt his men often took what he said in a literal sense.

It must be noted here that although only about six weeks had elapsed since the expedition started from Palos, Christopher Columbus had managed already to win the hearts of all his crew; and if they mourned at times, if they grumbled, if they were even on the verge of mutiny, it was never considered by him to be altogether their fault. His was a kindly-hearted, homely, feeling soul, and he had, moreover, the power of putting himself as it were in the place of any man who had committed a fault, and for the time being of thinking as he thought. His seamen, indeed, were in every way but one the great mariners' children—children of large growth, no doubt, but children nevertheless.

He tried to explain every new wonder to them, therefore, in the very simplest language he could master, and I do not think these children of his were ungrateful, even though they could not always understand.

One morning a strange bird alighted for a short time on the mainsail yard-arm, and for a time superstitious terror took hold of all the seamen who happened to be on deck at the time. Few, if any of the sailors, had ever seen so mysterious a visitant, and none could tell whence it came. It had been very dark just before dawn, and lo! when the sun at last shone red over the waves, there, above them, sat what one and all pronounced to be a demon-bird. It was of huge dimensions and of a curious ashy-brown colour, and it sat on one end with its naked, red, wrinkled face turned skywards, apparently oblivious of the presence of those below.

The weird-looking visitant had come, thought the crew, from the regions of the outer darkness to warn them that they must tempt fate no longer, but return to their own land as speedily as they had come.

But as soon as Columbus appeared he quickly dispelled their fears. It was but a pelican (booby, no doubt), he told them, which had flown from the land, and was now taking

the liberty of resting its tired wings. It was in reality a good omen, for it proved to them that they could be but a measurable distance from land.

That same day several smaller birds, with long tails shaped like a marling-spike (which has caused sailors to give them the name of boatswains), were noticed flying around the ship.

But, indeed, our adventurers were now coming into a region of wonders, and hardly an hour by night or by day passed that they did not see something or some creature to make them stare with astonishment or quake with dread.

The ships were now in the trade winds, the sea was all a sailor could desire it—no tall tempestuous waves, but everywhere rippled with the favouring wind, everywhere sparkling under the bright sunshine. The air was balmy and the night delicious.

Shoals of dolphins were seen at times apparently at play in the water, or leaping therefrom in the exuberance of their delight. Now and then, also, a solitary whale pursued his lonely way, guided by unerring instinct, but going whither none could tell. There is a mystery about the long and dreary journeys these animals take, often for hundreds if not thousands of miles,—straight as arrow could fly from bow,—that no one has ever yet been able to unravel.

The cloud scenery by day was a never-failing attraction, the air was very clear, and storms were often observed far away astern, or on either beam, that went trailing over the sea's surface without coming near the ship. In the early watches of the night the clouds that were banked up along the horizon were curiously lit up by flashes of light behind them, which revealed their strange fantastic shapes, brightly white one moment, dark as ink the next.

Lightning without thunder! Surely it was a strange world they were coming to!

One night a bright and beautiful meteor rushed down-

wards from the sky, lighting up the waves and the ships with a ghastly glare, and finally bursting over the sea in sheets of crimson flame.

Even Christopher Columbus himself could not explain to his people the true nature of a meteor of this kind, nor could he tell them what it might portend. He did all in his power, however, to allay their fears, and laughed them to scorn when they hinted at the possibility of their soon coming into a region where these awful meteors would be rained down from heaven like hailstones.

But a new and even a greater terror soon fell upon the superstitious crew, which for a time entirely eclipsed all their other foolish fears.

The ship had reached that strange region which is termed by sailors the Sea of Sargasso. The green and vine-like weeds were seen in patches at first, but these patches soon became more and more numerous, till they covered all the smooth and gently-undulating water. It needed but a slight stretch of imagination to fancy that the vessels were sailing across an undulating meadow.

Even Columbus was uneasy now, and betaking himself aloft, gazed anxiously ahead. But as far as eye could reach there was nothing before him but this strange green and yellow shining sea.

Although, however, he could not explain the phenomenon, he did his best to reassure the seamen as they clustered round him and beseeched him to go no further, and no longer to tempt Providence and fate. If they went on and on, they cried, it would soon be too late; they would be able neither to advance nor to retire, but would die slowly of famine in this ocean of rotting weed and slime.

The Sea of Sargasso covers a large area in the North Atlantic, and lies between two great ocean currents. It may be compared, indeed, to a kind of calm backwater, such

as you may see in the reaches of some rivers or even mill-streams. The weeds that float here are of a variety of species belonging to the plant Sargassum, which is kept afloat by tiny air-bladders or berries so-called.

It might be called a kind of tideless sea in mid-ocean, for things that have been floating in the currents get cast up here, and if you were to explore it many a strange thing would you find; for until a great storm arises and breaks up the weed, articles stranded here—if I may use the term—will float about, and even storms themselves may not suffice to set them free.

One can hardly conceive of a more lonesome and mysterious region in all the world of waters. Lonesome, because ships and steamers come not near it—mysterious, because, entangled in these floating weeds, may lie the clue to many a sad secret of the sea.

Here boxes and barrels might be found by the score, with many strange odds and ends that have fallen overboard from far-away ships, or been washed away by sweeping seas in the ocean's great highways, each of which has a little tale to tell. Here is a beef-tub, such as cooks use at sea. There would be no great difficulty in framing a story to fit that. Here is a boat's oar. Where are the hands that held it last? Yonder is a boat floating bottom upwards, but so covered with weeds and shells that it might have belonged to Vanderdecken himself. Yonder, entangled in slime, is a sailor's hat, or sou'-wester. Where is the wearer? Even echo does not answer, for this is the echoless sea. And yonder is a half-sunken mast. To the thick end probably a weight of shell and saline matter is attached, holding it down; but the cross-trees are above the weeds, and a spar, that bobs and moves about like the head of a snake. Did drowning men once cling, we wonder, to those cross-trees, hoping against hope, as they scanned the horizon for the

ship that never came, till despair succeeded hope at last, and one by one they dropped into the hungry waves?

And here in the midst of this silent sea you might at times find a bottle sealed and containing a letter—a bottle thrown overboard mayhap from a sinking ship, the letter breathing words of love and the sighs of a last farewell. That letter may describe the final scene in the voyage of a brave ship with a hopeful crew, which, years and years ago, sailed away from English shores, and was never more heard of. Verily the friends and relations of the sailor men who perished in the awful storm may have waited and hoped for long decades, and died at last in the belief that those they had so long prayed for might after all be safe on some lone isle of the ocean.

But are all things dead in this silent sea? No, by no means. The weeds themselves are alive, and, strangely enough, although there is no shoal water here nor soundings to be taken, small fishes may be seen gambolling about in the patches of weed, and innumerable little crabs, which nature has painted of the exact colours of the weed among which they live, so that they may escape their enemies. Here, too, we find the tunny-fish, and now and then the fins of a great shark may be seen unsettling and stirring up the weeds. And birds too are here—land birds that were blown away from their own bright far-off islands, and have never been able to return, and never will.

This was the sea which terrified the seamen, but brave Columbus resolutely refused to listen to their entreaties. Although the ship's way was impeded for a time, he told them they would speedily get clear again. And to make sure that the vessels struck not on bank or rock, he caused men to keep sounding, and gave orders that those on board the caravels should do the same.

One does not know whether Columbus during this first

great voyage of his is more to be pitied or admired. His calmness, good-nature, and patience were truly wonderful. His courage was splendid.

Yet I should not like you to look upon our noble hero as simply a brave man in charge of a timid or cowardly crew. The seamen, it is true, were sadly faint at heart, but not more so than men of any other nation would have been under like circumstances. Poor souls, they had long ere now given themselves up for lost! Day after day and night after night, sailing on and on through that blue and limitless expanse of ocean, that never-ending waste of water, one terror giving place to another, mystery following mystery as wave followed wave, superstition triumphing over religion, prayers prayed that seemed to sink into the fathomless ocean instead of rising to heaven, deserted apparently by every saint, and by the Father whom they felt in their hearts they were disobeying by seeking to unravel secrets which were His alone, what had they to look forward to but a death the very uncertainty of which rendered it more terrible in prospective? Death, and after that the judgment.

But he, the hero, who, though he must often doubt and even fear himself, must ever show a bold face and a calm, serene countenance before his people—are there, think you, any words of praise or admiration too great, too grand for him? Surely not; for his bravery combines every species of courage known to us even to this day. To no soldier marching against fearful odds; to no sailor of our time sailing towards either pole; to no traveller penetrating into the gloomy, beast-haunted forests of darkest Africa can be attributed such magnificent bravery as that displayed by Christopher Columbus, alone there, with his little fleet in the wide unknown Atlantic.

. . . . . .

I think, indeed I feel sure, that the prayers of Columbus,

so heart-felt, so earnest, were listened to, and his requests granted by the Father; for storms, ay, hurricanes, are not unknown in the regions in which he now was sailing. But day after day the gentle trade-wind wafted him on and over the beautiful sea, while the sun rose in glory and set in a splendour that no artist e'er could paint.

They had cleared away at last from the Sea of Sargasso, and no more weeds were seen, but the very steadiness of the wind began now to alarm the sailors. They looked wonderingly into each other's faces, and asked each other if it always blew from the east, and if so, how ever should they be able to return to their native shores. It seemed to them a hundred years at least since they had left fair Spain.

The crew was still in ignorance as to the real distance they had sailed. Had they known how very far they now were from home their hopes of ever getting back would have fallen to zero, and, indeed, they had almost reached that point as it was.

A breeze that sprang up in a contrary direction sufficed to banish one cause of alarm. But soon the wind died away altogether. The ships were becalmed, but becalmed in such a sea as no sailor on board had ever witnessed before.

Not a breath of air, not a cloud in the sky, not a ripple on the ocean, and yet, strange and unaccountable to these mariners of old, the waves were mountains high. Among these doldrums the ships rose and fell, yawed about and tumbled about like tubs or empty casks.

Here then was a new danger—a very terrible one too. They had sailed away for ever and ever from the regions in which the winds of heaven blew. And here, under the glare of the fierce sun, their ships might lie and rot. Their provisions would run out, their water would fail, sickness and starvation would follow, nay, even madness itself, and

to end their misery they would cast themselves into the sea. Yonder were sharks, awful-looking tigers of the ocean, that sailed round and round the *Santa Maria*, glancing ever upwards with their sly and devilish eyes, as if waiting for the feast they knew would soon be theirs. The awful monsters appeared to fascinate some of the seamen, and though tearing themselves by force of will away from the side of the ship, some power would seem to drag them back to encounter once more the spell and the glamour cast over them by the eyes of those floating fiends.

Signs of mutiny now began to appear among the crew of the flagship. Curiously enough, the very first words of insubordination were uttered by the timid Juan himself.

Terror seemed to have led this sad-faced young fellow to exhibit courage. It was the courage of despair.

"Come," he cried to a group of his companions who stood near the forecastle, "we have borne enough. Let us take the management of the vessel in our own hands, and before it is too late make some attempt to return to the friends who wait and long for us on shore. What care we for Columbus? He is but a madman at the best, and a foreigner at that. He regards not his own life. Why then should we cast away ours? Up, I say, up. Let us fight for our existence. Let us rise this very night and put this madman in chains, and cast into the sea to feed those hungry sharks all who dare to oppose us."

"Bravo! bravo!" cried his companions.

Fierce vindictive eyes glared aft now, and hands greedily clutched at knives in belts. The storm of vengeance seemed ready to burst.

CHAPTER VI.

MUTINY.

THE sun went down that evening slowly and slowly towards the cloudless waving horizon of water, and the great rolling wave-hills were lit up with a glory of opal, orange, and crimson that transcends description.

It was a glory, however, that, though it might have been reflected for a few minutes in the hearts of the seamen, soon faded away, and as darkness fell over the ocean like a thick pall, their hearts grew more gloomy than ever they had been before.

Even the rays of the twinkling stars gave them no hope now, though many a night they had wafted their thoughts heavenward.

A gloom seemed to have settled even on the officers to-night, and in the other ships it was just the same. Few spoke at supper-time, and shortly after this meal Columbus retired to his cabin to think and to pray.

He was no inconsiderate unreasonable commander, however, nor did he blame his crew in the least for their murmurings. On the contrary, he pitied them, knowing well that their lives were really in extreme danger should the calm continue.

Presently there came a gentle tapping at his cabin door. Columbus sprang up with his hand on his sword. That was not the steward's knock. Was foul play intended, then? Had it at last come to this?

But his mind was speedily relieved, when the open sun-browned visage of Galway Will made its appearance in the doorway.

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"COLUMBUS SPRANG UP WITH HIS HAND ON HIS SWORD"

"I would speak with you alone for one moment, Señor Admiral," he half whispered.

"Speak, my friend, speak; we are quite alone."

"I hear it is going to be to-night," said Will.

"What is going to be to-night, Guillermo? You talk in riddles."

"The crew mean to rise and seize the vessel against all opposition, and cast you into chains, or—may our Lady deliver you—into the sea itself."

"My good and faithful friend," said Columbus, melted almost to tears as he grasped Will by the hand, "I will not forget you for this kindness. Go forward, now. I will act, and act immediately. I trust no one suspects you?"

"No one except Alard knows I have come, good Admiral. He and I will stand by you till death."

"Good. Now hasten quietly forward."

Columbus lost no time now in getting his friends together in the poop saloon, nor in issuing his orders.

They were simple, but effective. All hands were at once summoned aft to hear the Admiral speak.

Meanwhile Ruiz and three officers with Alard and Will took charge of the guns in the forecastle.

Everything was done so quietly, that the would-be mutineers were positively out-manœuvred and out-flanked, before they had made up their minds how to act or what to do.

Having obtained a hearing, the Admiral renewed all his entreaties, and did everything in his power to soothe the fears of his crew. He made, probably, a more effective speech than ever he had done, and ended by asking them to join him in prayer.

As the hero stood there in the midst of his seamen, his noble countenance raised heavenwards in eloquent prayer and appeal, not the most mutinous sailor among those men

would have raised a finger to do him injury, and many were melted to tears and wept aloud.

He ceased speaking at last.

"Good-night," he said calmly now, "and the blessing of our Lady be over you and over me."

Then he called the men aft from the guns

As if in answer to the Admiral's prayers, once again the wind began to fill the sails, and the rolling seas sank.

For a time now the mariners forward appeared to forget their terrors, and all day long many an eager eye was turned towards the far-off horizon in the hopes of catching sight of land, for Isabella, Queen of Spain, had promised a handsome reward to him who should first see and report it.

The ships to-day—it was the 25th of September—sailed so close together, the wind being light and the sea only gently rippled, that the Admiral could talk from poop to poop with the captain of the *Pinta*. It was while conversation was being carried on about a chart that a joyful shout was heard from the bows of the latter.

"Land! Land!"

"Land?" cried Columbus joyfully, dropping the chart he had been studying.

"Land! Land!" repeated the seamen of the *Pinta*, and a dozen arms were stretched away towards the port bow, where what were to all appearance blue mountains were seen rising hazily over the sea's horizon.

Land! It is always a joyous sound to mariners who have been long on the lonesome ocean. But fancy, if you can, what it meant to those poor frightened and sea-weary sailors. Even hope of life returned to them with one glad bound. The joy of the Greeks of old on first seeing the ocean, the joy of the great traveller Stanley and his people on emerging from the dark dreary forest in which they had so long wandered, and seeing before them an open, a fertile,

and sunlit land, a veritable land of flowers, could be as nothing compared to the wild and exuberant delight shown by Columbus's men, when that glad shout rang from ship to ship.

Heedless of all discipline, the men rushed forward to the forecastle, and climbed high into the rigging, that they might feast their eyes on the glorious sight.

Captain Martin Alonzo Pinzon, with bold and manly voice, chanted the *Gloria in excelsis*, and all the three crews joined, while the Admiral himself fell on his knees to return thanks to Heaven for the glorious news of land—land—land!

The ship was now kept away a few points, being steered more to the south-west, where the supposed land was visible.

And so night fell, but hardly anyone slept an hour, and scarcely had the day begun to break ere every eye was once more strained ahead, to catch a glimpse of the hills they had seen on the previous evening.

Alas! and alas! disappointment, bitter and cruel, was their only reward. The land had been but a cloud or a chimera.

Their spirits, however, did not fall quite so low as before, for some days at all events, for there were the constantly recurring flights of birds to divert their attention, and in the sea itself thousands of fishes of many different species peculiar to these warm and sunny seas.

Again and again they were deceived by clouds along the horizon, that had the appearance of land.

And now once more the crew showed signs of open mutiny. An angry crowd gathered around the forecastle, and gloomy, nay, threatening looks were more than once turned aft to the poop, on which stood Columbus, apparently quite engrossed in talking to his pilot Ruiz, but taking in the whole situation nevertheless.

By the forecastle this evening there were two spokesmen; one was Juan of the Red Eyes, the other Galway Will.

It is quite probable that at this crisis, had the crew been under a bolder leader than Juan Doloroso, affairs might speedily have reached a terrible climax. Driven to despair, Juan had certainly found voice, but as a leader of men to action it must be confessed that he was a dismal failure, and a downright coward at heart. So Galway Will had always said, and events to-night proved that he was right.

Galway Will had a sharp voice as well as a sharp temper when it was roused, and when, during the heat of the argument, he taunted Juan with his cowardice, that voice rang from end to end of the ship. At first those on the poop, with the exception of the Admiral himself, thought that the Galway Irishman was really inciting the crew to open acts of insubordination. But they were speedily undeceived.

Translated into modern conversational English, the following are the words Will was heard to utter:—

"And why don't you go yourself, then, you poor apology for a man and a sailor? It is home with your grandmother you should be, you swollen-eyed snivelling starveling, and not amongst brave men, that would scorn to be guided or governed by a scarecrow like you. Ah, would you? Take that, then."

Juan's rage had burst all bounds at last, and he drew his knife and flew at Irish Will.

Next moment the knife was whirling overboard, and Juan was prostrate on the deck, "downed" by a blow from the Irishman's fist. It was a blow that would have killed a calf, and it certainly put an end to Juan's pretensions to become leader of the mutiny.

But now like wild-cats the Spaniards assailed Galway

Will, and bad would it have been for him had not sturdy Alard rushed to his side.

"Back, you cowardly curs!" he shouted, knocking down with a marling-spike the first man that advanced. "Back! Would you draw your knives on an unarmed man?"

Amidst shouts of "Overboard with the foreigners!" "To the sharks with them!" and "Seize the ship!" a general rush was now made upon Alard and Will.

But next minute, with drawn swords, Ruiz, and Cosa, and Diego de Arana came to the rescue.

And last, but not least, Columbus himself.

The seamen drew back, not so much in fear of the swords of the officers, as awed by the calm stern demeanour of the Admiral.

"My children, my children," he cried, "in the name of Heaven and our Lady, what mean you?"

"We would go home, *home*, HOME!" shouted some of the boldest. "You are luring us on, and on, and on to our death, and the final destruction of our bodies and our souls as well. We believe no longer your fair promises. We care not for your birds, for your floating sea-weed, nor for your strange fishes They are all illusory. They are but fiends in disguise. The islands we see day after day are not clouds on the horizon. They are real islands, painted of the devil, with whom you are in league. You are mad—you are mad—you are mad! Away with you, lest we seize and throw you to the sharks."

Columbus drew himself up to his full height, and he never looked more noble or more commanding.

"Men," he cried, "I have treated you well, I have borne with you long, I have preached to you, I have prayed with you, and for you. You have but to wait a few days longer, and we shall reach land. And now, listen. Here I stand on my own ship, an emissary of our sovereign lady

the Queen, Viceroy myself, Admiral of the Ocean Sea, and with my own good sword in my hand"—here his sword flashed bright in the evening sun,—"and with that sword I swear to slay the first man who dares to disobey my slightest behest and command. Gabriel Baraona, stand forward here. You are a gray-haired man, yet did I hear your voice exciting those foolish boys to mutiny and to murder. Lend a hand, sir, to set more sail. It is your Admiral who commands. Disobey me, and death is your doom."

Gabriel hung his head, called to several of his messmates, and in a few minutes extra canvas or studding-sails were being laced to the main-sails.

The mutiny was quelled.

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Tired with watching and anxiety, Columbus threw himself on his bed that night without even undressing. True enough the mutiny was over for a time, but how soon it might break out again no one could tell.

He had not meant to fall asleep when he lay down. Though it was many a long day since refreshing slumber had been the guerdon of his toil, he did not seem to wish for it to-night. He would lie awake and think. What ages seemed to have passed since he last bade his mother and sister farewell at Savona! Yes, his thoughts had naturally turned to the little cottage near the sea, where his father still dwelt, and to the green hills of Liguria. Always—always when very tired and weary, he sought consolation by thinking of home. And to-night he appeared for a time to shake off all his cares and even his ambitions, and to be a boy once again.

It is evening, and he is away out in the bay fishing with little dark-eyed Giacomo at his side, and Diego the boatman bending down over the "take," arranging the silvery fishes into three lots. Away in the west the sun is setting, its

bright beams gladden everything, they are reflected from the tall white houses, from the palace walls, and from the churches, they shimmer and shine on the dancing waves, and they tinge with crimson glory a long line of cloud that has just appeared in the eastern sky.

How pleasant is the motion of the boat! A gentle swaying rocking motion. The evening bells are chiming too, but his father and mother will forgive him. He can pray here, pray on the water, God is here and everywhere. Diego places his hand on his shoulder and looks anxiously into his face and— Columbus opens his eyes.

It is broad daylight. Alonso, the surgeon, is seated by his bedside.

Alonso is smiling now, though he was looking anxious but a moment before.

"You feel well," he asked anxiously.

"I never felt better, never more hopeful. But—"

He looked inquiringly at the good physician.

"Why am I here? you would ask. I will tell you, dear Admiral. Diego Salcedo came to me. He is a faithful fellow, but his face was pale with fear. He startled me, good Admiral. 'My master,' he said, 'sleeps so long I fear he is ill.'

"I hurried to your cabin and gently felt your brow. Your breathing was regular. You smiled in your sleep. You were happy. I did not wake you, but a moment ago I placed a hand upon your shoulder and you looked at me."

"Good Alonso! But how goes it with the ships?"

"Joyfully, Admiral, joyfully. Once more land birds in crowds are flying about our ship, and strange green weeds are floating around us too. There are many strange fishes also. Flying-fish leap from the waves at every side of us. Last night several flew on board as if to welcome us to the new land."

"New land, Alonso?"

"Yes, friend mine, for behold!"

The surgeon as he spoke held up a small branch of a tree or bush which was laden with rich red berries.

The tears came rushing to the Admiral's eyes. He bit his lip that they might not overflow. But for a time he could not speak, his heart was far too full.

He stretched out a hand at last and clasped that of Alonso.

"God hath heard my voice, Alonso; God hath heard my voice."

He took the little branch from the surgeon's hand, and after gazing at it for a time placed it reverently on his breast and closed his eyes, as if in prayer.

Presently he looked up again, and once more took up the branch.

"See, Alonso," he said, "it bears berries rich and red."

"Yes, Admiral, and speaks to us of the close vicinity of land."

"It bears berries rich and red," continued Columbus, "and, friend mine, it hath also thorns. It is a message to me from our holy saint the Lady of La Rabida. Fruit and thorns and green leaves too. It is a harbinger of my fate Hang it yonder, Alonso. Hang it yonder."

CHAPTER VII.

LAND AT LAST.

"ONE of the seamen would like to speak a word with you, Señor Admiral."

It was Cosa who spoke.

"Send him hither, good Cosa. Ha, Gabriel! is it you? What have you to propose, friend; further measures of violence?"

Gabriel knelt before him and did not look up. But Columbus bent down and raised him from the deck.

"You would crave forgiveness. You have it, Gabriel, and you have my blessing. Go and think no more hard thoughts of your Admiral. He loves his people as a father loves his children."

Gabriel would have spoken, but tears seemed to choke his utterance.

The Admiral patted his arm kindly and waved him away.

In a few minutes more Columbus was on deck and had gathered all hands around him. He spoke to them long and kindly, and finished by offering a suit of velvet to the man who first discovered land. "For," said the Admiral, "land must now be very near, and before another sun shall shine in yonder sky my mission will have been partly fulfilled, and I shall have taken possession of new lands in the name of our beloved sovereigns, the king and queen."

Every man and officer remained on deck almost continuously throughout that memorable day of October the Eleventh. There was a strong breeze blowing and a somewhat chafing sea, but as the day advanced and evening fell the waves got smaller and the wind sank to a gentle breeze. The sun set at last. As it went slowly down behind a dark blue cloud, which was bordered on its rugged top with golden light, one crimson ray darted from a rift in the centre and fell athwart the sea, and on to the poop, where were Columbus himself and many of his officers. Christopher was in the full uniform of an Admiral of Spain, his face looked happier than it had done for months.

"Behold," he said smilingly, stretching out his hand

towards the encrimsoned west, "behold, the very setting sun bids us welcome to the new land!"

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It was very dark at ten that night, when the Admiral, still surrounded by his officers, stood upon the poop gazing seawards ahead, and talking right merrily now as people do who have just been relieved from grief or anxiety.

The ship was under very easy canvas, so too were the caravels that were close aboard of them. Men forward were taking soundings constantly.

Suddenly the Admiral clutched at the shoulder of the officer who stood near him. This was Señor Pedro Gutierrez, a gentleman of the king's bed-chamber, who had come with Columbus as a volunteer.

"Pedro," he cried, "as I live I saw a light ahead of us. See, see, yonder it is again."

"I can see it," cried Pedro. "Oh, Admiral, that is land. The light moves as if some one carried it. How I wish the moon would rise. Sanchez, did you observe that light?"

Rodrigo Sanchez, the overseer, had not however been able to perceive it.

"Might it not be a light on board the *Pinta* or *Niña*?" said Alonso coming up at that moment.

"No, no," cried Ruiz. "Look, doctor, you can descry both the *Pinta* and *Niña* on our beam, well up towards the wind."

"Light ahead. Land! Land!"

The shout came from the forecastle.

More than a score of men had seen it this time, and a joyous shout was raised, which again and again came re-echoing back from the *Pinta* and *Niña*.

Not long after this the moon, then in its third quarter, began to struggle with the clouds that had banked up in the east. Its faint light cast but an uncertain glimmer over

the waves, and though every eye was strained to catch a glimpse of the promised land, nothing could be seen distinctly.

No one, however—certainly not the great navigator himself—thought of retiring that night. If land were to be seen, and of this he felt certain, Columbus determined that he himself should be amongst the first, if not the first, whose eyes should thereby be gladdened.

Being the best sailer of the three, and drawing but little water, the *Pinta* was ordered to stand on ahead, and to report to the *Santa Maria* by the firing of a gun the very earliest appearance of land.

And as the time flew by, and the night went on, higher and higher rose the moon, still struggling, however, in a cloudy ocean of cumulus.

Up and up she sailed. The middle watch was called and took charge, many of the men who were relieved still lingering on deck or hanging around the forecastle.

There was scarcely a sound now to break the stillness, for the men, when they walked on deck, seemed to glide along on tiptoe, and if they talked at all it was but in whispers. Now and then a sheet or block rattled and a sail flapped. Now and then the creak of the rudder hinges could be heard, or the mournful cries of some night birds, like spirit-voices in the air. The water lapped and murmured under the quarter, the wind sighed through the cordage.

Up and up sailed the moon.

It was now well on in the middle watch, and all conversation had ceased even in the poop.

Columbus had fixed his eyes on a patch or rift of blue sky into which the moon was slowly drifting clearer and clearer, and now its glad light shines over sea and—land!

Yes, land! For just at that moment the sound of a gun from the *Pinta* came crashing over the water, followed by a

shout that was quickly taken up by both the *Santa Maria* and the *Niña*.

And lo! yonder, right ahead and just a point or two on the lee bow, could be seen a long line of yellow sands, fringed by the snow-white breaking waves and backed by low rounded hills, with here and there a stately palm-tree, seen but indistinctly in the weird and moon-lit picture.

"Enough, enough! my friends," said Columbus, turning to his officers, as the moon once more was hidden by a dark and rain-foreboding cloud. "Enough, my friends, for one night! What to-morrow may reveal we cannot even conjecture. Enough that we have triumphed, that we have conquered every difficulty and wrested from the ocean the secret of long darkness-shrouded ages. Ruiz, to you I now leave the guidance of the ships till morning light. I will retire for contemplation. The very hour seems a holy one."

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The gun fired by the *Pinta* on the evening before had startled the savages of San Salvador or Watlings Island, and many of them had been awakened from their slumbers and rushed forth from their huts of grass. They were in time to see three great dark objects lying on the waves some distance out at sea, and their hearts were greatly troubled. What were those monsters that had so suddenly appeared upon their peaceful shores, whose voices were the thunder, their eyes the lightning flash?

Were they gigantic birds that had come from the sky and might land to devour them, or were they huge fishes that the sea had given birth to, and that would soon sink again in the waves?

They peered into the now increasing darkness, but could make out nothing; they listened, but acute though their hearing was, they could distinguish no sound above the droning of the breakers on the coral reefs.

All night long they waited and watched. The sky cleared towards morning, and soon the sun shone red over the waves, and all was revealed.

The three great birds still lay out yonder, but now they were raising their wings on high. Were they about to fly away again? No, no, they come nearer and nearer; and the savages become panic-stricken. They will fight to the death, however, if need be. So they hie away up into the bush, and there, under the banana and palm trees, carefully hide their wives and little ones, then rush down once more to the sandy beach.

Ha! these are not birds after all. Only great canoes with sails, which now are clued. And behold a crowd of smaller canoes are lowered and rowed swiftly towards the land.

The faces of all the new-comers look friendly. But they are strange, strange faces. And faces that shine like the sun or the moon, while their bodies are draped in purple, brown, blue, and in scarlet.

They are spirits! Yes, without a doubt they are spirits, such as their traditions, handed down from aged father to son through many generations, have told them of. They are spirits that have flown down from the skies to visit them.

And now the boats have reached the shore.

One, more richly attired than all the others, bears a flag, which he plants in the sand. Then he throws himself on the ground, and all the others follow his example.

These spirit-men seem strangely excited. But they look happy and filled with joy.

Such men as these come not here to conquer and to slay. There is no thirst for blood visible on their shining countenances; and so one by one, the bravest first, these naked savages, whose skins are painted and who look fearfully wild

and uncouth, come slowly and timidly out from their hiding-places behind their huts and under the leafy palms, and cautiously approach the beach.

The chief of the strange spirit-men—he in the robes of scarlet and gold, he with the glorious face, the snowy hair, and the mild blue eyes—goes forward to meet them, holding out strings of beads and presents of cloth, and little Spanish muleteer bells, as well as hawks' bells.

The savages are like children, and are soon mingling with their heaven-sent visitors with the most easy and joyous abandon.

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The boats had reached the shore very shortly after an early breakfast, but no one, not even the Admiral himself, dreamt of returning on board ship until nearly eventide. The weather was delightful, and after all their anxiety and suffering at sea, this island seemed like a foretaste of the paradise that lies beyond the earth and sky.

The natives brought them fruit and cakes and water, so one and all the weary wanderers gave themselves up to the innocent pleasures of the hour.

There was just one man belonging to the crew of the *Santa Maria* who had not yet attained to happiness. And this was Juan Doloroso, or Red-eyed Jack.

About mid-day Galway Will was seen approaching the Admiral, who was seated under a low spreading palm-tree, leading or rather dragging Jack by his doublet.

"How now, Guillermo?" said Admiral Columbus smiling.

"This everlasting fool," replied Will, "does nothing but sit under a bush and sulk and eat. He says that he was the instigator of all the trouble on board, and that he is sure you will kill him, as he richly deserves to die."

"Do you think, Guillermo, that he richly deserves to die?"

"Verily, señor, he did richly deserve to die; and my hand did nearly knock the life out of him. It is one of those hard hands that are made only in Ireland. See, your highness, he bears the dark impression of it yet on his right eye."

Juan the Dolorous had thrown himself at the Admiral's feet.

"Yes," said Will, "had I killed him then, it would not have mattered. The sharks would soon have eaten him, and there would have been an end to his murmurings. But now, señor—" Will paused, and laughingly pointed to the sun and to the thickening groves of foliage all around them.

"See, señor, how bright the sun is, how merrily the waves tumble and sing their snow-white songs on the beach, and how greener even than bogs in Ireland are the woods around us! It would, methinks, good Admiral, be half a sin to slay so poor a subject as Jack on such a day in such a place."

"Arise, Juan," said Columbus smiling, "Guillermo has saved your life. There, go and be happy with the rest. You are forgiven."

"Lo, señor!" cried Will, "the creature is weeping again."

"It is with joy," sobbed Juan.

Then he stooped and kissed the hem of his Admiral's robe, and after this seemed as happy and joyous as anyone.

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The island on which Columbus first landed was one of the Bahama group, and was named San Salvador by the Admiral. Its native name was Guanahanee. It is considered, by recent authorities, to be the island at present known as Watlings Island.

Savages are in some ways very like children in their manners and conceits, and if one makes much of them they

are almost certain to take advantage of one's good-nature. Columbus and his people soon found this out. And early next morning the *Santa Maria* had visitors enough. She was evidently the favourite ship, and hardly had the day dawned ere many of the islanders were crowding around her. They had come in canoes or by swimming. They did not appear to be at all afraid of the sharks with which these seas abound.

As if in token of their entire confidence in the mariners, they had left their spears on shore. The canoes brought fruit, and all the natives had curios and trinkets to barter. The bells were a special source of amusement to them. They hung them about their necks and arms—even attached them to their ears—and jumped or wriggled around in the drollest way imaginable, in order to make the bells ring and jingle.

Some of the trinkets they gave to Columbus were of pure gold, and in sign language he inquired whence they had come. In sign language the savages replied that the gold came from the south and the west.

The next day, in the evening, after having well reconnoitred the island in boats and on foot, being everywhere received as no mere man but as a god, Columbus set sail and continued on his voyage.

With him went, willingly enough, several of the natives, and that very evening Galway Will and Juan Dolorous, who were now sworn friends, set about teaching these savages simple words in Spanish; and wonderful memories they proved to have, though their pronunciation was oftentimes laughable in the extreme.

On board the *Santa Maria* was a Jew who had been converted to Christianity, and whose name was Luis de Torres. He had been shipped as an interpreter, but his gift of tongues was not of the slightest use with these long-haired

savages. So the Admiral had recourse once more to the oldest language in the world, a language that, travel where one will, is almost everywhere the same, and is understood even by the lower animals—the language of signs.

It is wonderful, too, how much information the Admiral managed to elicit from these natives. He drew pictures and plans, or picture maps, at which they were much pleased. He pointed, while on deck, to every direction of the compass, and in reply, to the west, to the south, and even to the north-west the savages gave him to understand that there were islands innumerable. In a jargon that of course could not be understood, they mentioned the names of many of those, but shook their heads and engaged in mimic warfare, to show to Columbus that on the islands much bloodshed and much warfare or fighting had taken place.

The savages also wound golden trinkets around their ankles, their wrists, necks, and arms, and pointed south and west with much laughing and rolling of eyes, all of which Columbus understood to mean, that the races on the other islands had plenty of gold and plenty of finery as well.

Now, although the Admiral believed he was not far off the island of Cipango, or Japan, as we now call it—knowing nothing of the great continents of America and the wide Pacific Ocean that lay between him and the far-off land of Asia—it struck him forcibly that what these savages seemed to tell him as to the multiplicity of islands in these seas must be strictly true. He determined, therefore, to discover as many of these—and to annex them to the Spanish throne—as he could, and afterwards sail onwards to the mainland.

The water was everywhere very clear, and the sea by day of many different colours, patched with greens, opals, black, brown, or deeply blue, according to its depth and the nature of the bottom.

It was evident, therefore, that navigation would be most perilous, unless a very great degree of caution were observed. He sailed very slowly, therefore, and on arriving at the island, which he named Santa Maria de la Concepcion, at which, having been detained by contrary currents, he did not reach until the evening of the fifteenth, he cast anchor for the night, thinking it wise not to land at dusk among savages, of whose character and ways he was entirely ignorant.

Armed sentries were placed everywhere about the decks in case of a surprise. But the night was undisturbed by surprise or alarm of any kind, though the crew could see lights twinkling along the shore, and often heard strange savage screams or yells, which caused some of the less brave among the seamen to grow cold with fear. It was evident that the natives had expected the navigators to land that very night.

The darkness wore away at last, and sunlight brought with it a gentle breeze from off the land, laden with the rich perfumes of a thousand flowers and the warm spicy balsamic odours peculiar to these lovely islands.

After breakfast boats were called away, and the landing was effected, with the same formalities as that resorted to at San Salvador, the people of this new island evidently thinking, as did the others, that this strange invasion hailed from spirit-land.

CHAPTER VIII.

SAVAGES.

PROBABLY no man who ever lived knew better how to deal with and treat savages than did Columbus. Most of his experience he had no doubt gained on the coast of

Guinea, for savages are much the same at heart all the world over. But experience is not everything. Many a man may have experience enough without possessing the tact to put it to proper account.

One who takes his life in his hands and goes to dwell among blacks, must be a colonist at heart and to the manner born. He must be brave to begin with. No amount of bravado will make up for the absence of real heart-felt courage, that kind of it which is twin-sister to calmness, and *sang froid* under any emergency.

A child, a dog, or a savage seems to know by instinct the character of the man who stands before them; and no mere assumption of bravery, of straightforwardness, of dignity, or *amour propre*, will deceive the savage if that quality is not possessed by the would-be colonist. Next in point of value to innate bravery comes firmness of purpose, coupled with gentleness and patience. And then comes downright honest love of humanity and kind-heartedness.

And all these qualities Columbus possessed in a very eminent degree indeed. No man could possibly be braver, no one ever was more kind-hearted than he. If, indeed, as a colonist he failed in any virtue, it was somewhat in firmness. Often and often his love for humanity would cause him to think too much good even of his enemies, and to forgive faults which it would have been better for himself and his friends had he punished severely and speedily. His own heart was so guileless that it pained him to hear any evil imputed to others.

Had those men whom Columbus left behind him, when he returned home from this his first voyage, followed the tactics of their admiral, the dreadful tragedy which I shall have shortly to speak of would never have taken place.

As part of his plan of conquering these savage islanders by kindness if possible, the great navigator lost no oppor-

tunity of conciliating them, or ingratiating himself and his people in their favour.

The Indians, as they were called, who had taken passage in the ships were most kindly treated in every way. Yet before leaving this new island of Concepcion, one of them who had been on board the *Niña* leapt into the sea and swam towards a canoe which had been following the ship. No doubt the poor fellow imagined, that in going away with the fleet, he was leaving for ever and ever all that he held dear. Pursuit in this case was quite in vain. The *Niña's* boat had no chance at all in a race with that swift canoe, impelled by the sturdy arms of the savages. So the men returned discomfited, and not looking over happy. But soon after this another Indian came timidly alongside the *Santa Maria* in a canoe, offering to barter a ball of cotton for trinkets.

Now was our hero's chance. He captured and took on board not only the trembling native, but his canoe as well. The poor creature may well have trembled, for doubtless he thought that speedy death would now be his doom. He was agreeably surprised, for the Admiral talked most kindly to him, smiling as he did so. He placed a beautiful cap of coloured silk on his head, glass beads about his neck and arms, loaded him with pretty presents, restored to him his cotton and his canoe, and set him once more afloat.

This treatment had no doubt an excellent effect upon the other natives, who speedily surrounded him when he reached the shore.

The fleet now put to sea once more in search of still another island. When far away from Concepcion, they encountered a little canoe with one black savage in it, and he also was picked up, and shown precisely the same form of kindness as the other.

It is no wonder, therefore, that when that night the ships

anchored before an island that he called Fernandina (now Exuma), Columbus found that the fame of his little fleet had gone before him, and that very far indeed from being afraid of him, the natives welcomed him with much rejoicing, bringing him gifts of fruit and trinkets, and curios of many different sorts. In return for these, the natives received beads and bells, and were invited on board and made very much of by the seamen.

This island was more beautiful by far than the others. The people, too, were rather more civilized, and the women wore garments made from a kind of grass cloth, dyed blue. Columbus and his people on going on shore were most kindly entertained, the Admiral himself being as usual worshipped as a god, who had, by some means or another, dropped from the sky to visit and do good to the islanders.

The tents or huts in which these natives dwelt were well suited for protection against storm or sunshine, being carefully built of wood and branches, and thatched. They had verandahs also, so that as seen from the shore with the beautiful feathery palm-trees drooping over them, and a wealth of trailing and climbing flowers everywhere, they were both lovely and picturesque.

In this island was found a splendid harbour, formed by a bay with a lesser isle, that acted as a breakwater at the mouth thereof.

But however delightful it might be to laze and enjoy himself among so primitive and good-natured a people, Columbus felt bound to continue his investigations. He had heard that there was a larger island than all not far off, in which a great king dwelt, who had gold mines and was sovereign of all the seas around. The name was Samoete, and it lay to the south-east. Here, although no great king or chief resided, and no gold mines were discovered, the Spanish navigators found themselves in a veritable earthly

paradise, a kind of enchanted island as far as natural beauty went. It was not so level as Fernandina, there being several rolling hills all covered to their summits with trees and verdure. And not only were there hills, but there were also several fresh-water lakes, surrounded by woodland scenery more lovely far than poet ever dreamed of. The trees were everywhere festooned and garlanded with flowers of the most gorgeous hues and strangely fantastic shapes; flowers carpeted the banks and trailed over every open space. There were flowers, flowers everywhere, and fruits the most tempting and luscious that could be imagined; while flocks of bright-winged parrots often obscured the sun like clouds, and the smaller, though not less beautiful birds, filled the air with the charming melody of their songs.

Nor were there any wild animals in this island, or anything that could cause fright or alarm to the seamen, with the exception, perhaps, of the iguana lizard, a huge and ungainly monster that was sometimes seen lying flat against a rough tree stem or wriggling along the branches. Other lizards there were in thousands, but many of these were not only beautiful in shape, but of the brightest metallic shades and colours.

It seemed to the mariners all, that perpetual summer reigned among these islands, for as yet they had experienced none of the dreadful storms, by which at certain seasons of the year the Bahamas are visited.

During his stay here, and especially at Samoete—which after his queen he had renamed Isabella—he had heard much of a very large island, which he had not the slightest doubt in his mind must be Cipango, but which turned out to be Cuba.

He determined, therefore, to sail for this at once, and having thoroughly reconnoitered it and taken possession of

it in the name of his sovereign, his next move would be to sail straight away west once again, and he reckoned that in ten days' time he would then strike the mainland of Asia or India, and visit the far-famed city of Quinsai, that Marco Polo described as the largest and most beautiful in the whole world, with its gilded palaces, its huge harbour, in which thousands of ships might lie, its splendid public buildings, and its wide rolling river spanned by a hundred bridges of purest marble! Having presented his credentials to the Great Khan of this rich country, he would then have fulfilled the greatest portion of his mission, and would return in triumph to Spain.

Columbus was by no means a vain man, but thoughts of so grand a victory over nature as he had already accomplished, to say nothing of that which he might yet perform, were surely enough to have caused him a good deal of pardonable pride and satisfaction. It never once, however, to his honour be it said, withdrew his mind from the worship of his Father in heaven, and oftentimes to those around him he would remark, while praising and marvelling at all the strange and wonderful things in nature that he saw around him:

"God and our Lady has all the honour and glory of this great triumph. Not I, not I."

. . . . . .

In a fleet, however, manned by adventurers and volunteers from all parts of the country of Spain and elsewhere, it would have been strange indeed if there had not been some who grumbled.

Chief amongst these were Rascon and Quintero, the seamen who owned the *Pinta*.

"This is all very beautiful and all very nice," Galway Will heard the latter say to his companion one day, while on shore on the isle of Isabella—"all very good, and the

old Admiral seems mightily pleased about it. But where, I want to know, is the gold?"

"Ah! yes," says Rascon, "and where are the pearls and all the other riches we were going to be loaded with?"

"Be quiet, you grumbling old idiots," said Will. "You have only got to have patience and wait."

"We've waited long enough, and what have we here? Why, a few flowers and green trees, that is all. Pah!"

"And," added Quintero, "we are surrounded by a lot of naked stinking black fellows, that, for aught we know, may rise any day and slit our throats or spear us in our sleep. Pah! I say again, I am tired of all this. Who is to pay us for our caravel that your pretty Admiral robbed us of? Who is to look after our wives and children if we are slain, Your Admiral is a—"

"Stop!" cried Galway Will, "stop just there! for by all the kings in Ireland, if you speak but a word of evil against the good Admiral, it is down on your back to study the stars you will be in a moment, with a whole shower of your teeth rattling down your unwholesome throat. Take warning."

The two men frowned and grasped their knives, but Alard happening to put in an opportune appearance at that moment, they retired to the bush, muttering words that certainly were neither prayers nor blessings.

"There is no saying what these fellows may not do," said Galway Will. "Oh, Alard! my bold soldier boy, my five right fingers were itching to grasp that dark Rascon by the neck!"

"Better not, perhaps," said Alard laughing. "They may stab you from behind a tree one of these days."

"Had we not better report them to the Admiral?"

"We had better not do this even. They would be revenged. Do not lose your hot head, my friend. Come,

I am going fishing with an Indian in his canoe. Will you accompany me?"

"Why should I not? I'd go with you to face death, Alard, for the sake of the long friendship we have had together, and for sake of the mothers we have left behind us."

"And our sweethearts, Will?"

"Ah! short is the time they take to think of us."

"Now, good Will, I believe you are mistaken. I have been dreaming of my sweet girl."

"So have I of mine; and if dreams would do anything, I would soon be at her side."

"Ehow! there is no saying; but I think, Will, that dear Inez loves me yet."

Talking thus and walking arm in arm they reached the beach, where a faithful dark fellow was waiting for Alard with his canoe.

It was only a dug-out, and when she was fairly launched, Alard and Will had to keep well in the centre to prevent her from capsizing.

Merrily now the Indian plied his paddles, and they were soon out in the beautiful bay, and gazing down into the water upon a submarine garden with coralline groves and waving coloured sea-weeds, to describe which quite transcends the power inherent in my poor pen.

The fishes caught by Alard and Will were more gorgeous in colours by far than even the birds of the forest. Many, indeed, were of surpassing loveliness, and of all the hues of the rainbow. They were strangely shaped, however, and some of them odd-looking even to hideous ugliness.

Two or three of the men who had eaten of these curious fishes had afterwards been attacked by sickness and vomiting, so to-day, although the two friends fished, it was for mere sport, for, with the exception of a few that the Indian told

them were good to eat, they threw all they captured back into the sea again.

. . . . . .

Columbus left the enchanting island of Isabella on the night of the 24th October, and with a gentle but favouring wind, steered south-west by west for the island of Cuba.

It was still very early in the morning of the 28th, when they came in sight of its magnificent mountains and forest-clad hills and valleys. He found the entrance to a clear and beautiful river, which he at once named San Salvador. Sailing up this stream a little way, the three vessels anchored among the woods, and soon after the Admiral went on shore.

Canoes had met the vessels on their first arrival, but no sooner had the Indians caught sight of the mariners' faces than they paddled quickly away; and on landing to take possession of the island, and name it Juana after his prince, the Admiral found a village near by quite deserted. The inhabitants had fled so precipitately that they left behind their fishing-gear and spears, and even their dogs—dogs that never barked, we are told.

After rowing a long way up this river, and being everywhere struck and even awed by the grandeur and beauty of the forest and mountain scenery, Columbus returned to his ship, and, re-embarking, the voyage was continued to the westward; for the men from Guanahanee, who still remained in the *Santa Maria* to act as guides, kept assuring him that in that direction lived the great king who owned the gold mines and ruled over all the other islands.

So the Admiral pursued his voyage still to the westward, passing the mouth of at least one large stream, and coming at last to the largest he had yet seen, and which he accordingly named Rio de Mares.

On the banks of this river were many large huts and houses, which, on being visited, the Spaniards found gave

evidence of considerable advancement in civilization compared to that attained by the inhabitants of the lesser isles. They even kept birds in cages as pets, and amused themselves by wood-carving.

Leaving this great river to be more completely investigated at a more convenient time, the Admiral sailed once more westwards—where, it was stated by the Indian guides on board Pinzon's ship, the chief of all the rivers lay, with a great country all round it, abounding in wealth of gold and precious stones.

But now the weather became very far from favourable to further exploration in this direction, and as the wind became not only high and contrary, but the sea itself wild and broken, the ships were put about and ran once more for the Rio de Mares, where they were brought safely to anchor.

The inhabitants who lived by the banks of this beautiful river had all fled on the first arrival of the ships, which they seemed to think belonged to some great chief or khan, who meant to bring upon them all the horrors of war.

They now, however, appeared in force upon the beach, and Columbus despatched a boat containing one of the Guanahanee guides to address them. There was no mistaking this man's courage; for as it was evident the savages would disappear if the boat landed, the guide stopped it while yet some considerable distance from the bank, and in their own language talked long and earnestly to the people, assuring them that the white men meant them no harm, but had come to visit them in the most friendly way, and to bring them beautiful gifts from a king who dwelt far far beyond the sea.

The guide then leapt into the water and swam on shore, where he was presently seen talking most earnestly to the natives, showing them the beads he wore around his neck and arms, and the tinkling bells in his ears, and evidently

assuring them that there were plenty more of the same kind on board the friendly ships.

This mission was perfectly successful, so much so, indeed, that before sunset quite a crowd of canoes, bringing the usual presents and desirous of bartering cotton for beads and bells, were hanging in the river around the ships.

These savages, like the inhabitants of the other islands, had cotton to barter, and various kinds of valueless trinkets, but neither gold nor silver, precious stones nor pearls.

With the aid of his Guanahanee guides and his own knowledge of sign language Columbus questioned the men of these islands about that great king he had heard so much about; and from all he could hear it was evident enough that the royal palace was at least three or four days' march into the interior.

He understood them to say that this king was the mightiest in the whole world, and owned many slaves, plenty of soldiers, and, last, but not least, any quantity of gold and precious stones.

This was the very sort of king that not only Columbus, for the sake of his royal master and mistress, desired to meet with, but his crew as well. The Admiral began now to believe that he was really on the borders of India or Asia, and that the wealthy cities spoken of by great travellers like Marco Polo were but a score of leagues or so in the interior.

It was strange, however, that if the river in which his fleet now lay flowed past any mighty city higher up, there were no signs of ships at all. However, he determined to despatch an embassy to the palace of the king in the interior, and thus put things to a test.

CHAPTER IX.

THE AMBASSADORS.

FEELING perfectly sure in his own mind that he had actually landed on the mainland of Asia, as one of the envoys to the great king Columbus despatched Luis de Torres, the interpreter, believing that his knowledge of Hebrew, Arabic, and other Eastern languages would enable him to converse freely with his majesty. The other envoy was an intelligent Spanish seaman of the name of Roderigo.

With these, to act as body-guards, were sent Alard and Galway Will, in whom the Admiral continued to place the greatest confidence; and as guides, one of the Indians from Guanahanee and a native whose home was on the banks of the Rio de Mares.

Columbus awaited their return with a considerable deal of anxiety, not to say impatience. He determined, however, not to remain idle while the ambassadors were absent. Work would help to while away the time; so he gave orders to have the three ships thoroughly cleaned, overhauled, and to some extent re-caulked also.

Meanwhile he himself, with some of his officers, made many pleasant little excursions up the river in boats, which they would leave in charge of natives, and strike right into the beautiful woods and forests, and even climb some of the highest hills.

Columbus was a ready writer, and there was much to see and describe in this lovely land, which would make his journal most interesting reading for the queen and king on their return to Spain. And every thing and creature was as fresh and new to our hero—every tree, every bird, ay,

and every beetle—as if he had been transplanted from this world of ours into another planet.

"The lakes," he says in one part of his log, "and the woods and groves around them are marvellous, while everything is as green and beautiful as in April in Andalusia. The singing of the birds is such that it seems as though one would never desire to depart hence. There are flocks of scarlet flamingoes by the river-side and in glades of the woods. There are flocks of parrots so numerous that they darken the air with their beautiful wings, and flocks of many other kinds of birds, both great and small, and all of them different from ours at home. It is indeed wonderful! Besides all these things, there are trees of a thousand species, each having its particular fruit, and all of marvellous flavour, and I am certain that each and all are of the greatest value."

He mentions also finding a variety of spices, and also many kinds of valuable woods and gums—specimens of all of which, as well as of many kinds of herbs, he collected in the woods and valleys, to take home in his ships.

Meanwhile, how fared it with the ambassadors? Well, after journeying for some time along the banks of the river the guides struck off at a tangent. The country seemed to become more and more beautiful and wild, the farther they got from the sea-shore. Nor was it wholly uncultivated. For they found in the glens or valleys many a little hamlet or village nestling prettily by the banks of a stream, and around it patches and fields of maize, of pepper and different kinds of spices, with sweet potatoes and tapioca. There were small cotton plantations also in abundance.

As they journeyed through this land of promise they were everywhere well received, and sometimes when the guides told the wonderful tale of the white men, the simple inhabitants threw themselves on their faces in the very dust before them.

By sunset they had journeyed about four leagues, or sixteen miles, and, on coming to some houses rather better than any they had yet seen, they resolved to stay here for the first night, and resume their journey by easy stages next day.

Their hosts received them with great kindness, and brought them delicious fruits with which to quench their thirst, while the evening meal was being prepared.

Meanwhile the sun went slowly down behind the rugged hills, amidst a cloud-splendour that they had never seen surpassed, not even at sea. It was not simply in the west that all the beauty of colouring lay, but right across the whole dome of heaven to the eastern horizon. To-night it was crimsons and golds that predominated. The sky, indeed, was one wondrous study in vermilion and ochre, but gradually the light faded, the clouds became bronze and copper, and finally faded into gray. After this darkness fell very speedily. Yet there was not a tree or bush over which, and through the branches of which, fireflies of great brilliancy did not dance and flicker.

While Alard and Will were lying under a palm-tree, wondering at all this, a firefly that did not dance at all was noticed by the Irishman.

"What is that little glimmer of light just yonder, Alard?" he said.

"I have been looking at it too. It is only a steady little point of fire, and I believe I can see smoke rising from it," replied Alard.

"You are right. Though the flame or light is no bigger than my mother's thimble, there is smoke to it. I'll tell you what it is, boy; it is an evening sacrifice of some sort. It is an Indian form of worship. And can you not now scent the smoke?"

"Yes, Will, and I do not at all dislike it."

"Let us go and see."

"All right."

The two friends now felt their way through the darkness to the point of fire, and a minute afterwards Will's outstretched hands had caught hold of the naked slippery form of a savage.

He started back as if he had touched a snake.

There was nothing to be alarmed at, nevertheless. The savage was indeed engaged in a species of worship; but it was at the shrine of the goddess Nicotina. In other words he was smoking.

After supper, in the starlight, for the moon had not yet risen, they saw many more points of fire, when the savages squatted around in a circle.

"Strange, is it not?" said Alard.

"Yes. What do they do it for? They powder pungent withered leaves, roll the powder in a dry leaf, light one end and draw the smoke down their throats."

"What fools!"

The Rio de Mares native now approached, and lighting a torch presented each with a cigarette.

"Shall we try it, Will?"

"It cannot hurt if they do it."

So Will and Alard commenced to smoke, and no doubt they were the first European sailors that had ever attempted any such folly.

They smoked in silence for some considerable time.

"I say, Alard my friend," said Will at last, "I am beginning to feel remarkably old."

"And I feel very ancient indeed. Pooh! no more of this. My head is all whirling round. I believe my lungs and brain are all on fire. Lo! Will, do you think we are poisoned?"

"No, not a bit of it. I think these blacks are far too good to do us any harm. I'll go to bed though."

Both men staggered so when they arose that the natives had to help them into their hammocks—*hamacas:* pieces of cloth hung between upright posts.

They slept off their dizziness; but even next morning when they awoke they felt far from well.

"Never again, Will," said Alard.

"Never again, Alard," said Will.

Very early that day after eating a hearty breakfast of broiled fish, eggs, honey, cakes, and fruit, surely enough to satisfy even the hungriest hunter, the wanderers presented strings of beads and a few bells to their hospitable entertainers and pursued their journey. They had still over twenty miles to walk. This would be a short journey indeed over good roads; but here were no paths worthy even of the name. A few tracks worn by the feet of Indians, that seemed to go winding away in all directions—these were all, though for some reason or another—known only to themselves—they were religiously followed by the Indian guides.

Towards noon, while they were in the midst of a dark dank forest high up a glen, the sky suddenly became overcast, and a few drops of rain fell.

This was speedily followed by a flash of lightning and a rattling peal of thunder; but the guides seemed equal to the emergency. Instead of seeking shelter under the trees, they hurried the wanderers on and on, up the almost inaccessible sides of a mountain not far off. They were soon high above the trees. But they paused not here. "Excelsior!" seemed to be their motto for once, and before the Indians paused to take breath, the little party had climbed to such an altitude, that they could quietly rest and witness one of the most marvellous sights in the world, a tropical storm raging far beneath over the glens and wooded valleys while they sat safe and dry.

The lightning was vivid and dazzling, streams of fire ran

athwart the clouds for seconds at a time. Great balls of fire seemed hurled through the branches of the forest trees, peal followed peal of the most startling thunder, merging into one continuous roar. All the world below them appeared to be resolving itself into chaos, and even the sea—visible afar off when they first reached this safe elevation—was now a mass of rolling storm-agitated clouds, while, dimly seen through the tempest-haze, foaming cataracts poured down from the hills in all directions.

It was altogether a sight that appalled the stout hearts of even Alard and Will, and caused Luis de Torres to cross himself and mutter prayers for mercy.

One strange effect of the storm was to send large flocks of birds up from the woodlands below, and when at last the thunder grew less and less loud, and the clouds went trailing seawards over the valleys, the noise and screaming the frighted parrots made, was almost deafening.

But the storm cleared away at last, and the ambassadors prepared to resume their journey. Not, however, before Galway Will had collected quite a number of botanical specimens for his Admiral. This was quite thoughtful of the man, and acquired him great credit from Columbus.

The day after this was so fine, and the air, now cooled by the storm, so balmy and delightful that no great progress was made in the march, and evening once more overtook them before they reached the journey's end. But once more they found themselves in safe and comfortable quarters, with plenty to eat, and cotton hammocks to sleep in.

Only they wisely resolved to leave smoking alone.

No doubt their arrival had been heralded at the great city they had come so far to visit, for hundreds of spear-armed savages came out to meet the gallant envoys, crowding around and almost jostling them, in their eagerness to examine their faces and hands and garments.

Before long the guides informed Luis and the other two white men that they were now in the great city itself, and would almost immediately be conducted into the presence of the king.

Galway Will looked around him, and then was rude enough to burst into a fit of laughing.

"Great city!" he cried. "Oh, Alard, I shall die. Why, my old mother's cabin in the wilds of Galway is a palace and a paradise compared to any house we see here."

But, with much shouting and rattling of spears, they were now conducted to the king's house, where they were seated in high chairs to await the royal presence, the natives squatting round them in dark grinning circles. Indeed, coming right in out of the bright sunshine to this large but gloomy tent, for some time all that the ambassadors could see of those around them was their white teeth and their rolling eyes.

But presently they got accustomed to the twilight, and things became altogether more pleasant. Fruit and food were brought in broad leaves and placed before them, and water as well, and both Alard and Will made themselves as happy and jolly as the circumstances would permit.

"Poor creatures!" said Will. "It seems a pity too; but never a shirt have they to their backs bar the womankind; and it is not to church, at home in Ireland, I would care to be seen going with them either. But see who comes here?"

It was the king himself. A tall majestic-looking brown-black savage, with long straight hair, and carrying a huge spear, on which he leaned as he stood boldly before the ambassadors and bowed. He was arrayed in loose cotton garments, and his neck and arms and legs were encircled with gold and silver ornaments, while a kind of crown which he wore on his head was adorned with beautiful feathers.

He certainly looked a noble savage as far as nobility in

savages goes. A gentleman, too, in his own way, for when the ambassadors rose as he approached, with one dignified wave of his hand he begged them to be reseated.

Then he stood waiting.

The guides looked at Luis. Luis cleared his throat, and made a speech in some language that was Greek to Alard and Will. It was evidently Greek to the great king also. He shook his head sadly and said "*Ara to sao.*"

"That is Irish," cried Will. "He is telling you that the knowledge is not upon him. It is a sort of heathen Irish, but it is good enough for all that."

"Then you shall address him," said Luis.

Will was nothing loath. He had not had such an opportunity of airing his own language for many and many a day. His speech was impassioned, laudatory, and persuasive by turns. As no one understood a single word of it but himself, it might just as well have been the reverse. However, Will was pleased if nobody else was. He assured Alard that his eloquence had gone straight to the hearts of every one of these savages, and was bound to be productive of the most happy results.

The chief shook his head once more, and said "*Ara to sao.*"

Then he appeared to appeal to the island guide for a translation.

"Give him," said Luis, "the message of Columbus. Say that their Castilian majesties desire nothing in this world more than an alliance between himself and Spain offensive and defensive, and that they have sent their greatest admiral over the sea to him with precious gifts and the assurance of their respect and good-will."

The island guide said all that and a deal besides, that quite delighted the savage king and his still more savage subjects, and so the interview closed.

The presents were then interchanged, and next day the embassy commenced their journey seawards.

When Columbus was told of the size and poverty of "the great city," he seemed for a moment a little crest-fallen; but presently he and his officers were laughing heartily over the whole affair.

"And you saw no gold, Guillermo?" said the Admiral.

"Only what the king, señor, wore in his ears," said Will, "and that, he told the guide, came from Babeque."

Columbus was much pleased, however, at the good accounts the ambassadors brought of the vegetable wealth of the country, and he thanked Galway Will for the specimens, promising that he would bear him in mind when the country came to be colonized.

As no further good could be anticipated from a longer stay here at present, and as the cool season was now coming on, with a probability of wild and stormy weather, Columbus determined to bear up for the east.

He had, however, formed a very high opinion of the natives of this island, and felt certain in his own mind that he had discovered a land that would eventually produce both gold and precious stones, and form one of the richest gems in the Spanish crown.

The people, too, he thought, could be easily converted to Christianity. And there could be no better way of bringing this about than that of taking home with him several men and women—the most intelligent he could find—that they might be trained as missionaries for their own beautiful land.

He now weighed anchor, and the three ships proceeded along the wildly beautiful coast in search of Babeque.

From every island he came to, the kind-hearted Admiral brought some pretty gem or trinket to present to his wife and children when he should return, showing that he never ceased to think of home.

CHAPTER X.

TREACHERY.

ONE dark and stormy evening toward the end of November, Columbus and his little fleet were beating to windward considerably to the east of the island of Cuba. The sea had been rough all day long, and as the wind was dead in their teeth, with every prospect of its increasing as night fell, the Admiral determined to put back.

He accordingly made signals to the other two vessels to accompany him, and got the *Santa Maria* before the wind. Not, however, without considerable danger, and the shipping of several green seas that all but swept the decks.

Sail was shortened, and as soon as things were straight once more, and the vessel dashing proudly through the waves, it was observed that, though the *Niña* had obeyed orders, the *Pinta*, whose captain could not have failed to notice the signals, was still beating up against the wind, and was now far astern.

Signal lights were burned all night, but when, anxiously enough, Columbus scanned the horizon next day at early dawn, there was no *Pinta* anywhere to be seen.

For nearly two hours the Admiral walked the deck in silence, and never since the voyage commenced had his face been so clouded and full of pained concern. He went below at last and sought his own cabin, from which, however, he shortly emerged, and joined his officers at the morning meal.

"And yet I trusted him so." These were the first words he said after the usual salutations.

"You refer to Pinzon, then," said Cosa, the master, "or rather," he added, "the Pinzons. Do you think it is possible they can have deserted?"

"Alonso," said Columbus, turning quietly round to the surgeon, "is it possible for all the officers of a ship to be struck suddenly blind?"

"Possible? Yes, señor, but very highly improbable."

"Then, my good friends, Pinzon is false."

"May not the men, headed by Rascon and Quintero, have mutinied and carried away the ship by force?"

"Such things have happened," replied the Admiral, "but mutiny can never take place on board a ship without some outward signs. The helm would have been neglected for a time. Signals for assistance of some kind would have been made, or probably in the scrimmage the vessel would have broached to. No, Cosa, again I say Pinzon is false, and if he had his deserts he should hang as high as Haman.

"But oh, Alonso," he continued, "think of the ingratitude and the cruelty of this base deed! Alonso, I trusted the man. I took him for a man of noble mind, and as guileless and innocent as he undoubtedly is brave. But lo! he has proved himself worse than the meanest mutineer who ever scuttled a ship or cut his captain's throat."

There was silence around the table as Columbus spoke thus heatedly, it was so unusual for him to speak a harsh word against anyone.

"The very intemperateness of my language, friends, must prove to you how deeply I feel the base desertion of Pinzon."

"I do not blame you," said Cosa, "and although for your sake I try to look at the brightest side of the picture, I must add that I fear the worst has happened."

"His object must be the greed of gain," said Ruiz.

"Or glory," said Alonso.

"You're right, my good surgeon. You see, his desertion is a triple robbery. He robs me of a ship, he robs me of men, and of renown."

"That he never can," cried Cosa. "Come, my dear

Admiral, it pains us all to see a cloud upon your brow We look to you as we look towards the sun for light and joy. We—"

"Enough, enough, my well-beloved Cosa," said Columbus, smiling now, as he extended his hand and grasped that of the master, "enough. See, the cloud is already gone. May Heaven and our Lady forgive me that I permitted even for a moment that cloud to fall upon my own soul! Let us hope for the best even yet. We are but poor, finite souls, Cosa, seeing darkly and dimly as in a glass. Yes, yes, all will yet be well."

. . . . . .

Leaving the *Niña* and *Santa Maria* for a short time to pursue their voyage to the west, let us take a look on board the *Pinta*. And for sake of seeing things more clearly, let us roll back the scroll of time and look at this desertion from what we may call the Pinzon point of view.

"Francisco," said Martin Alonzo Pinzon to his brother one day as the vessels lay in the Rio de Mares, and while the embassy, with Alard and Galway Bill, were gone into the interior of Cuba—"Francisco, we have not had a walk together for a long time on *terra firma*. Come, I would see the birds and the butterflies, and feel a boy again."

"I am with you, Martin," said Francisco with alacrity.

The boat was quickly alongside, and in a few minutes the two men had landed, and together, hand in hand, had struck right away into the woods. They refused the guidance of some natives who offered to accompany them. Both were brave men, and feared nothing; besides, they were well armed.

Presently they found that the ground beneath the trees was sloping upwards.

"We are on a hill," said the younger brother.

"Good luck to us!" cried Martin laughing. "Let us

follow this winding path, it will lead us upwards. I am tired feeling my way around in this jungle. I want to see the sun again and feel the warmth of his cheering rays. Do not you, brother mine?"

There was a deep meaning in every sentence the elder Pinzon spoke. And his brother knew this was so.

"I love the sun, Martin, as you know, and would risk much to find it."

"Bravo! spoken like my own brave brother!"

No more was said for many minutes. The forest ended all at once almost, giving place to a shorter growth of trees and hardy ferns, and soon they were high up above the woods and valleys, on a silent mountain bluff.

The day was very beautiful, the air clear and balmy, and laden with the odour of a thousand flowers. It would have been difficult to say which was bluer, the distant sea or the cloudless sky. There was just enough wind up here to cool the brows of the two brothers, as they threw themselves on the ground and gazed around them.

Neither spoke for a time, both seemed too much enraptured with the loveliness of the scenery to put their thoughts in words.

Martin was the first to break the silence.

"We are up out of the gloom of the forest at last," he said. "A stiff ascent, was it not, brother mine?"

"Yes, and yet we helped each other on."

"Brother," said Martin, extending his hand, "we have always been as one. You will stick by me still, and ever?"

"Yes, ever, brother, if you have quite made up your mind."

Martin Pinzon sat bolt upright now, and talked boldly, determinedly.

"I have, Francisco," he said. "I have thought it over a hundred times, talked it over with myself, dreamt of it, and it ought to be done. It is justice."

"Justice?"

"Yes, justice, brother; justice to you, to me, and to Vicente, too, though he is more faint-hearted. Besides, I have been driven to it. Who is this Columbus that he should order anyone belonging to the proud house of Pinzon about as you and I are ordered? A great mariner? Yes, forsooth. Does he know more than we do? Verily, no. Perhaps not so much. Behold how overbearing and haughty he was that day we exchanged charts! Was it not I and you who first discovered the land? But he will take all the glory. Yes, and he will take all the gold as well."

"If we permit him."

"Bravo! Spoken like a Pinzon. But Columbus would treat us like slaves, and, arriving at home at last, we would sink into obscurity. He would permit us to do so. Permit us to rot in the gloom of the forest, while he stood out on the bold mountain-top in the sweet sunshine, with all the world at his feet."

"Very grateful for the money we advanced him!"

"Yes, Francisco, that would be his gratitude. But should we ask him to share with us some of his glory and his riches—for that we have discovered rich countries there is no denying—what would his answer be?"

"A haughty look."

"Right, brother, right."

"Then you counsel that we should desert?"

"Nay, nay, brother mine, no such thing. He shall desert us. Wait and see. Leave it now in my hands, Francisco. My other officers will obey orders, I know. If not—"

"If not, we will appoint others in their place."

"Certainly. We shall take but few more commands from this Genoese adventurer. We are Spaniards, and the house of Pinzon yet shall flourish high in our own dear old land."

The next interview of any moment between these two brothers brings us down to the evening of the day of desertion.

Captain Pinzon had managed his ship so well that she was very far ahead of the *Santa Maria*, and managed also to have only himself and brother as officers on deck during the time the signals were made, both the pilot and the purser being in the poop cabin, and the surgeon forward in the forecastle, seeing to a poor fellow who had been severely injured that day, while helping to put the vessel on another tack.

When Martin first saw the signals he clutched his brother by the arm and looked astern.

"It will be now—to-night."

That was all he said.

In the gloom of gathering darkness and storm the *Pinta* still went on beating to windward, and so busy did the captain keep the men, that even when the signal-lights of the *Santa Maria* twinkled over the sea, no one had time to think much about them.

And so the night wore on, and the wind increasing to more than half a gale, all hands were employed baling the vessel, for she shipped green sea after green sea.

Nevertheless Captain Pinzon stood boldly on.

It was long past midnight before he lay down, and just as daylight was beginning to dawn hazily over the ocean he was once more on the poop.

"Cristoval," he said to the pilot, whose watch it happened to be, "where is the *Santa Maria*, and where the *Niña?*"

"They are nowhere visible," replied the pilot. "But," he added, "I am told that lights were seen in the middle watch, as if the Admiral were signalling to us."

"Is that so? Then, Cristoval, the *Santa Maria* must have put about. We will proceed under easy sail. Without

doubt the other vessels will soon join us. But see, there is high land in sight. I would speak privately with one of our Guanahanee guides."

This guide was seen talking very excitedly to the brothers Pinzon, and pointing southwards and east, and Cristoval could hear him make frequent use of the word "Bohio," which he took to mean the land of gold.

But the Pinzons did not seem at that time to be inclined to follow the advice of this native, and the wind now falling round more to the south, the course was altered, and with a breeze well abaft the beam, the *Pinta* bore up for the land then in sight.

It turned out to be one large island and several smaller, with dangerous coral reefs around them. Pinzon succeeded in finding an anchorage, however, and an exploring party was immediately sent on shore. Their report was not of a satisfactory nature. The country was exceedingly beautiful, but the natives had fled, and with the exception of one very old man and a few children, whom they found in a hut, none of these could be communicated with.

Pinzon lay here for a few days, until both wind and sea had gone down, for the passages among the rocks and reefs around these islands were dangerous in the extreme.

Once fairly away into the blue water again, all sail was made for the land of gold.

. . . . . .

Baffled by head-winds and cross seas, it was two days before Pinzon brought the *Pinta* to anchor in a beautiful bay off the island of Española—the modern San Domingo.

Strangely enough, the arrival of the vessel seems not to have been altogether unexpected, and it is wonderful how quickly news travels among the inhabitants of savage islands. Canoes hurry from one island to another, and a distorted image of the truth is soon spread north, south, east, and west.

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THE GUANAHANEE GUIDE POINTS TO THE LAND OF GOLD

But either from superstitious terror or from actual fear of death, the inhabitants of this new land appeared for a time determined to keep well aloof. One Indian in his canoe appeared at last, however, and hung for a long time at some distance off, until encouraged to come nearer by the sight of beads and bells. Some of these were thrown to him, and at last he ventured on board. At the same time savages, armed with spears and bows, appeared on the beach, as if to watch the reception of the envoy.

Pinzon pursued the tactics of Columbus, and sent the man away loaded with gifts and dressed in cap and bells, though the fellow was certainly no fool.

Nor was Martin Pinzon. He had noticed that a kind of gold amulet hung around his neck, and when asked by the Guanahanee guide where it came from, he pointed eastward.

"East, east," said Martin to his brother, who stood near him; "it is ever east."

"But this will suit us," replied Francisco with a meaning smile.

"Yes, it will suit us. We do not want to be too far west at present."

These natives soon became very friendly, and some of them volunteered to sail with Pinzon as guides, and their services were thankfully accepted.

Still beating to windward, the *Pinta* kept well out to sea, and made her way slowly along the beautiful shores of Española.

A day and a half afterwards Pinzon anchored in the river Gracia, and made all haste now to establish friendly relations with the natives, and to prosecute his search for gold.

In this he was more successful than even his expectations had led him to hope. The natives were kindly-hearted and

innocent, and although they brought the Pinzons plenty of gold, they did not seem to think it of any particular value. The beads and bells with which they were presented in turn, and the caps and cloth were well worth working for, but not the gold.

Gradually, however, the supply became less and less, and in a few weeks' time was all but exhausted.

The brothers Pinzon, therefore, held another consultation. Pinzon the elder was the spokesman chiefly.

"We must do the best we can for ourselves, brother," he began. "We have already done much. We have wrested from that haughty son of a weaver, a share of the glory that he would have kept for himself. We have discovered far more than he has. This land is much more lovely than Cuba. It is ten times more wealthy. We, you and I, brother, are the real discoverers of the land of gold. And of this we have already a fair share on board. But, brother, it will not do to return to Spain without the other vessels after all. Let us, at all events, seek for them, and if we find them not, let us bear up for home at once, and, peradventure, we shall be the first to bring the glorious news to our king and queen."

"You speak like a philosopher, brother. And it is well we should make pretence to seek for the lost ships, for Cristoval, our pilot, and the purser also might—who knows? —say in Spain that we had deserted."

Captain Pinzon, it may be stated, had with lavish hand distributed a large proportion of the gold among his crew, thus buying, as it were, their good-will and their silence.

Before sailing again, many curios as well as specimens of trees, and fruit, and even flowers were taken on board, and last, but not least in Martin's estimation, several young natives, both male and female, were captured, to be carried to Europe as slaves and presented to the queen.

Verily, the Pinzons had played their game remarkably well. But it did not follow that they were to win, nevertheless, as the sequence will show.

CHAPTER XI.

THE GREAT CACIQUE.

THE loss of the *Pinta* by desertion was a great blow to Columbus, but he was wise enough to retain a bold calm face before his crew. Nor did he allude to Pinzon again even among his officers in any other way save in sadness and sorrow.

"Heaven has seen fit to afflict me," said the Admiral, "through my captain, Pinzon. He has done an evil deed, but the sorrow will ultimately rest on his own head."

. . . . . .

For about a week longer the Admiral continued his explorations in Cuba, and the more he saw of it the more was he struck by its great beauty and fertility. Then he sailed eastwards once again, and about mid-day land was discovered to the south-east, and all sail made in that direction.

When towards sunset of that day—December the 6th—the *Santa Maria* and *Niña* found themselves not far off the beautiful Hayti, or western portion of the great island of San Domingo, the officers seemed to have no words in which to express their admiration at the lovely scene now spread out before them.

A gentle breeze was wafting them onwards over a blue and rippling sea, the sky above was almost cloudless, the air so pure and clear that, although still over a league from

the shore, every high light and shadow, every rock and mountain-top, the green of the winding valleys, the pines and palm-trees, the verdant plain, the yellow sand, and the long line of snow-white breakers, all were painted by the hand of Nature in colours more bright and translucent than anything the great navigator had ever before seen.

Over all, too, there was the silence, the deep impressive silence that one naturally ascribes to a land fresh from the hands of the great Creator.

Around the ship many beautiful land-birds fluttered or flew, strange gulls tacked hither and thither emitting plaintive screams, one brightly-coloured broad-winged moth floated across the poop where the Admiral stood, while slowly sank the sun adown the western sky.

No one sought to interrupt the reverie into which Columbus seemed to have fallen. His face was very calm, but very happy and hopeful. And, indeed, he felt at that moment as a man may feel who stands before the God who made him, the God he can love and trust; and there was in his glance not only hope, but wonder, worship, and adoration. He turned away at last with a sigh.

"How do you feel?" Cosa was constrained to ask him.

"I could not tell you how happy I feel, good friend; but most of all do I feel my own exceeding littleness. Oh, look around you, Cosa," he added; "think you that the Father hath in all the wide world a land more lovely than that? Would that the queen were here—would she were here! How shall my poor tongue ever be able to express to her majesty all the truth, or my poor pen describe it? I am overwhelmed at the sight of so much beauty. And, Cosa—"

"Yes, señor."

"Last night while tossing uneasily on my bed I made up my mind to throw Martin Alonzo Pinzon in chains did I meet him—"

"And you mean to?"

Columbus smiled. He waved his hand towards the hills, and the woods, and the blue sea.

"No," he said; "I will forgive him."

That evening in the starlight the ships anchored in a natural harbour formed by a river which rolled placidly down from the glens, broadening as it passed through a verdant plain. They had crept cautiously in, the little *Niña* first, with men taking soundings as they neared the shore. Far on either side of them thundered and droned the snow-white breakers, but in the bay itself all was peaceful.

Sentries were set to keep watch all night long, but nothing came near to disturb them; yet fires on the bluffs here and there were seen burning, and figures crossed these occasionally. No doubt these were meant as warning signals to other tribes, for it was found next day that the place was well populated. There were many canoes found also, but no owners.

Columbus called the harbour St. Nicholas.

They sailed again that day, still going east, and lay at anchor detained by contrary winds in the mouth of a river called in our day Monstique.

There was everywhere in the beautiful country here evidence of its being inhabited. They found houses and canoes, and farther inland roads and even cultivated fields, but terror had driven the inhabitants back into their mountain fastnesses.

Walking in the woods here one day, and collecting specimens for the Admiral, were our friends Alard and Will. They had just laid themselves down under the shadow of a spreading tree to quietly discuss some delicious fruit. Neither had spoken for some time, and Alard seemed asleep. Suddenly, however, Will grasped his arm, and

silently pointed to a tall dark figure that stood listening in the very centre of the glade close by, the sunlight glancing brightly on her cheeks, her shoulders, and arms.

No gazelle ever looked more frightened than she when Will sprang out from under the shadow of the great tree and seized her by the arm.

For a moment she appeared almost paralysed by fear, but she uttered no sound. Then she struggled to get free. Will alone could not have held her had not Alard rushed to his assistance.

They did all they could to lessen her terror, but to little purpose.

"I think," said Will, "we had better take her on board at once."

"Yes, that will be best," said Alard. "She is as supple as an eel, and will be certain to escape us else."

"Oh, I'll carry her on my back sooner than lose her. Why, Alard, friend, this is the best specimen we have found to-day. The good Admiral will be delighted."

The good Admiral was indeed delighted, and very soon he managed so far to ingratiate himself into that coy damsel's favour, by presents of bells, beads, and many pretty things, that, finding other women on board, she begged hard to be allowed to remain also. But this was no part of the Admiral's plan. He loaded her with gifts and sent her on shore again next morning with a band of well-armed men, among whom were Will and Alard, and a Cuban who could speak the language of these Haitians.

After a very long journey into the beautiful interior of the country, guided by the girl herself, they arrived at the banks of a river, and at a large town or village. But the inhabitants fled, followed, however, by the Cuban and the girl.

Will and his companions lay quietly down to rest after

partaking of the food they found here in abundance—yams and fish and sweet potatoes; for they appeared to have surprised the natives about their dinner hour.

In the woods grew bananas and many other delicious fruits, so that the dessert, washed down by the pure water of the river and a modicum of wine they had brought with them, was not the least important portion of this *al fresco* banquet.

Before very long the guide returned, and behind him were the villagers with the kidnapped girl. Both guide and girl, however, had told those simple savages such a romantic tale about the generosity and goodness generally of the white men who had come from the clouds, that they were no longer objects of fear but of positive adoration.

As the day was now far spent, and there was much of this beautiful country yet to see, the party determined to prolong their stay until next morning. So they wandered together through the lovely woods and along the banks of the river, far up the glens, and even to the hill-tops, and when they returned at last to the hospitable village, they all agreed that they had discovered a perfect paradise on earth.

"Well, Alard," said Will that evening before they lay down to sleep in the grass verandah of a little hut, the rest of the company not far off, "I do not think I would mind much living for a hundred years, more or less, in this lovely country; especially if mother and sister and the sow were here."

"And Bridget?" said Alard.

"Well, yes, and Bridget. Ah, brother, Bridget could not help smiling on me in such a paradise as this."

"But, I say, Alard," he added, "do you not think the people might wear a trifle more clothing?"

"I do," said Alard laughing.

"Just for decency's sake, you know; although, mind you,

Alard, they did not dress much better in paradise itself, before fig-leaves became fashionable."

In two days more, after erecting a great cross on one of the hills, Columbus again set sail in search of the land of gold, for here hardly a trinket made of this metal was to be found.

If the reader will glance at the map, he will note that, some distance north of the Haytian portion of San Domingo, lies a small and somewhat elongated island. It is not so small as it appears, however, and is so very beautiful that one valley in it was named by Columbus the Vale of Paradise. The whole island he called Tortuga, signifying a turtle, for he found shoals of this eminently edible reptile floating here in the water or lying on the sands.

Leaving this beautiful isle, the Admiral once more cruised across to Española, getting still farther along its northern shore; and it was on the twenty-second day of December that, as they lay at anchor, the seamen reported the approach of a very large boat or canoe filled with naked savages. They were friendly, however, and rowed boldly up to the *Santa Maria.*

The native who was esconced in the stern-sheets of this boat, if I may so speak, was invited on board, and stepped up without exhibiting a particle of fear or trepidation.

He was met by the Admiral himself, by whose side stood the Cuban interpreter. However much or little Columbus might have understood of what either man said, there was no mistaking the gist of the visitor's meaning.

He brought a handsome present to begin with, and he evidently came from the palace of some great chief, king, or cacique, whose territory and town lay further to the east. Would the great white cacique accept the present, and would he anchor his ships opposite to Guacanagiri's dominions?

The Admiral would be delighted to do both, and would

proceed eastwards as soon as the wind would permit him so to do. Meanwhile he made his obeisance to Guacanagiri through the medium of his servant, and sent him many beautiful presents.

He was then lying at the port of St. Thomas, and although some considerable distance off the land, not only did scores of boats visit the ships, bringing all kinds of edible presents, but hundreds are said to have swum all the way out.

There is safety in numbers, and it is a well-known fact that sharks will never attack a crowd of men in the water. I have often been one of seventy or eighty men who leapt together from the bulwarks of a gunboat, to bathe in the roadstead off Zanzibar. There were sharks enough there, but we never had an accident, though the scramble to get on board again and not be the last—the very last—man was always very exciting and amusing. However, the natives who swam off to the Admiral's ships were darkies, so their danger was less, for the tiger of the seas seems to prefer white flesh to black.

Well, a portion of one of the presents sent to Columbus, by the great Cacique Guacanagiri was mounted with pure gold. This naturally made the Admiral anxious to know all about the friendly chief's country. The wind not being fair next morning for leaving St. Thomas, he therefore despatched an embassy to visit him in his own town. The chief himself received this embassy. His kindness to his guests was truly remarkable. Followed by dense and admiring crowds, the Admiral's people were conducted to the cacique's house or palace, and a great feast at once prepared in their honour. Nor was there anything that any of the white men seemed to admire, that was not generously presented to them.

Fain would Guacanagiri have had the embassy remain all night at his town, which was large, fairly well built, and

populous, but the Admiral's orders that they should return that same evening could not be disobeyed. And so farewells were at last said, and the sailors took their departure, accompanied by the guides.

Although the town of Gaurico, where this savage cacique lived, was little more than three miles from the sea, the men on returning had some distance to row to the westward, so not wishing to be late, they made all haste.

The moon, not yet full, was high over the hills to the east and south, and shining very brightly on the sea. There was scarcely a sound to be heard except the occasional scream of a night-bird or the thud of the oars in the rowlocks. The men worked steadily and well; yet all were silent for a time. Is it any wonder that on a night of such surpassing loveliness, and amid scenery so sublime, and that night so near to Christmas, their thoughts should wander far across the wide Atlantic Ocean to their friends and homes in sunny Spain? Some of these men had wives and children, others aged parents to think lovingly about. What were they doing to-night? Sitting round the fire, perhaps, and talking of them. Yes, that they must be, the sailors believed, forgetting that what was night with them would be morning in Spain. But what of that? thought would meet thought across the water just the same, for both time and distance are slaves to hearts that love.

Alonso, the surgeon, was one of the officers in the boat.

"Men," he said presently, "we do not forget that this is a holy night, do we? Christmas eve falls to-morrow. Day has already dawned in Spain."

"No, no," from several of the crew.

"Heaven has been very kind to us, and has brought us safely through many more dangers than even we know of. May He bring us safely through many more, and guide us at last in safety to our far-off happy homes in our darling Spain."

As if with one accord, the men cease rowing for a moment or two, the oars lie horizontally across the water, the drops that fall therefrom are like drops of liquid silver in the moonlight, and every head is bent low. The men are praying.

. . . . . .

Columbus is on the poop. He has been walking slowly and silently up and down there for some time, only casting a glance shorewards now and then, where the hills and woods are all asleep in the tranquil moonbeams, or eastwards across the sea. The *Santa Maria* is slowly rising and falling to the heave of a slight swell and the send of the tide. He too feels it is a holy night. He too has permitted his thoughts to roam far away to wife and children in Spain, and to the little cottage by the sea in Savona where his aged father dwells. And now he too is praying.

He is praying for success in his enterprise; praying for more of the light of loving-kindness to dwell in his heart and enable him to forgive all his enemies, to forgive even Pinzon; praying that his good ship the *Santa Maria* as well as the little *Niña* may safely return to the port of Palos.

But earnest as is the good Admiral's prayer, he does not forget to add, "Thy will be done, for thou knowest what is best for us."

Even as he prays there falls upon his ear the sound of distant voices on the water.

Nearer and nearer.

The voices are raised in song: a holy hymn, as suits this holy hour.

"Thank Heaven!" mutters the Admiral.

And as the moon shines down on his upturned face it sparkles also in tears, but they are tears of gratitude.

Columbus is calmly happy to-night.

CHAPTER XII.

SHIPWRECK.

THAT Christmas Eve, fourteen hundred and ninety-two, was doomed to be a sadly eventful one in the annals of our hero.

The Admiral, after turning in very late at night on the twenty-third, had fallen into a train of thought, and had tossed about on an almost sleepless pillow till nearly morning. Nor was this the first restless night he had suffered; for, like all good captains of ships, he seldom lay down to sleep when his vessel was upon an unknown coast, whether a strong breeze blew or not.

Ah, those weary trains of thought, what a deal of trouble they have to account for! Had Columbus but slept well for one single hour, he would have awakened fairly well refreshed instead of nervous and excitable.

As it was, his harassing thoughts, when he did drop off at last, only served to land him in one of the toilsome mazes of dreamland, in which one fancy succeeds another with painful rapidity, and from which a man arouses himself at last far more tired than when he first closed his eyes. Pinzon had been uppermost in all the Admiral's dreams to-night, just as he had occupied the first place in his waking thoughts, but only a thousand times more loathsome. For in the dreams Pinzon was a monster snake that had wriggled on board over the bulwarks from the black waves of a hideous sea of slime; he had struck at Columbus with his envenomed fangs, he had crushed to death the man at the wheel and had seized the helm. Despite all that the Admiral could do the ship was being steered north and away into

the regions of ice and darkness, for the sun was setting and would never more shine kindly on the *Santa Maria.* This was the last dream that our hero dreamed ere starting from his cot, the cold beads of the sweat of terror standing on his brow.

"I will sleep no more," he cried aloud.

In a few minutes after this he was dressed and on deck.

The moon had sunk, but stars bright and clear were still studding all the sky. Nevertheless, early though it was, the Admiral called all hands and hailed the *Niña* that he was about to sail.

A gentle breeze was at this time blowing from off the shore, and if it held, Columbus knew he should be opposite the river on the banks of which stood the town of Guacanagiri, in time to visit this cacique about evening-tide.

The ships stood well out to sea, in order to catch all the wind possible, and not because the Admiral had any fear of the shore, for it had been surveyed by the officers, who visited the cacique only the day before.

The morning was as lovely as the night had been, but far too still, for, by the beginning of the forenoon watch, the wind had gone down so much that it barely sufficed to fill the sails. The men leaned drowsily on the deck or lolled against the taffrails, gazing down into the deep, transparent waters far beneath, in which was many an object to attract their attention; great medusæ or jelly-fishes, their rhythmically-moving limbs studded apparently with rubies and emeralds, floating sea-weed of every tint and hue, and shoals of strangely-shaped fishes, that appeared to have bedecked their bodies with colours stolen from the rainbow.

Here and there a shark's fin appeared dark above the blue, the green, or the opal of the ocean's breast, and on one of these a gull had alighted, both bird and shark evidently sound asleep in the sunshine. Other gulls slowly tacked

around the ships, or dived for crumbs, or floated drowsily on the gently-heaving swell.

The sunshine was everywhere to-day, for there was never a cloud to be seen. The woods simmered in a wavy, half-visible haze; the line of rolling breakers was as white as the newly-fallen snow; the sands like amber and gold; the very mountains or hills appeared less near to-day, but more spiritualized. It was as though they had sunk to slumber under the moonbeams of the night before, and still slept on in the sweet sunlight.

All on board the *Santa Maria* had given themselves up to the enjoyment of the *dolce far niente*, with the exception of the commander. Columbus alone was restless and cast many a glance horizonwards, and thence to the flapping sails, as if praying for the lagging wind to blow.

But he himself gave in at last, and finally went below to write his log and to study his charts.

And so the long day wore to a close. The sun went down, twilight fell, and stars and moon shone out, but the wind still lagged.

Columbus was more cheerful to-night at the evening meal than he had been for many a day, and conversation was very brisk all around the table.

He went on deck immediately after, but, thoroughly tired at last, he gave orders that a good look-out should be kept, and that he should be called as soon as the vessel approached near to Guacanagiri's river. Then, about half-past nine, he retired to his cabin, and, worn out by long watchfulness, soon fell into a deep sleep that was disturbed by no fearful dreams, not even by the serpent Pinzon.

. . . . . .

On such a night as this and in a climate so delicious, so balmy, all nature seems to sink to sleep. And on this memorable Christmas evening the silence was everywhere deep,

intense. Not a sound from the sea, not a cry from the woods, hardly the flap of a sail or the creak of a bolt to be heard! The ship is gently rising and falling on the breast of the breathing sea, for the very sea itself appears to slumber, while the tall masts nod to the moon and the glimmering stars.

Not a sound? Yes, there is a slight murmur that could have been heard had anyone been awake to listen to it. Very far off and in towards the shore is this gentle, soothing murmur, which is caused by the waves tumbling in and breaking into foam on a hidden reef of coral. All asleep? None to watch? True; and how strange it is! Even the officer of the watch, lulled by the warm and perfume-laden air, has dropped off as he lies on the poop, where he sat himself down to think of home.

There is no danger—not the slightest! So think the men, and they too seek for an hour's repose; the helm being given into the charge of Juan Doloroso, or young Red-eyed Jack. He is not the best helmsman in the ship, but on a night like this he has but to keep her on her course.

Juan gazes dreamily at the compass for a short time. He never altogether understood it; he always half-dreaded it. It seems now to blink and lear at him, and to nod and grin in his face. But there is a kind of fascination about it nevertheless, and so he keeps looking—looking—nodding—he is asleep.

The boom of the breakers on the reef becomes louder and louder, as the current catches the ship's head, and she floats on and on with the send of the tide.

Louder and louder! Yet deeper and deeper sleep the watch —what a misnomer!

Louder still the breakers boom.

And now there is a tell-tale rasping sound beneath the *Santa Maria's* keel, and next a heavy bump. The guns of

an attacking foe could not have awakened all hands more speedily than did that awful thudding noise.

The Admiral himself is almost the first to realize the horror of the situation. They are not yet far on the reef; astern is the deep, dark waters; ahead the boiling, seething, snow-white foam, and the remorseless, breaking seas.

The noise now is deafening, the bumping incessant; every roller lifts the vessel on high, and leaves her to fall with a thud upon the coral bottom.

The crew, only half awake, rush hither and thither. Everyone tries to do something, but the noise and confusion is only increased by the shouting of orders that no seaman hears enough of to obey.

The Admiral commands the master more by gesture than word to lower a boat, to get an anchor out far astern, to see if, with God's help, the ship may not even yet be warped off.

The boat is lowered, the men crowd in. Out yonder, in the direction in which Columbus pointed, lies the *Niña.*

"Yes, yes," the master thinks, "the Admiral wishes me to hie for assistance, that the lives of the crew may be saved."

Before he has left the ship a dozen yards, Columbus sees the mistake the master has made. But he shouts after him in vain; his voice is drowned in the roar of the booming waves.

It is an awful moment. But Columbus already feels that all is lost—except life. That may be saved.

He does not relax his efforts yet to save even the ship, however. The main-mast is cut away and cast over the side. But if she is lightened by this, it only results in drifting her farther upon the awful reef.

The Admiral wrings his hands and utters a prayer, for the *Santa Maria* has now partly broached to and is slowly falling on her beam-ends.

When he prayed for a breeze that day—for Columbus was constant in prayer, his religion being part and parcel of every action in his life, even the most trivial—he little thought that, had his petition been heard, it would not have been for the best. The calmness of the weather was now his own and his crew's salvation.

Now assistance comes from the caravel, and in a few hours all are safely out of the wreck.

Several of the officers are sent on shore, with some trusty men from among the crew, to carry the news to Guacanagiri; and meanwhile the *Niña*, with her burden of shipwrecked mariners, is kept tacking about at sea, a slight breeze having arisen, for the Admiral will not risk her on shore until the day breaks.

For some hours now he has time to think. And sad and harassing those thoughts indeed are. All his brightest hopes seem to have been dashed away by one sudden stroke from the hands of angry Fate.

As he leans over the taffrail and gazes mournfully towards the one dark spot in the midst of that whirl of broken water, he is reviewing his life for the past few months, and trying to find out in what way he has displeased Providence and wherein lies his greatest sin. He longs to humble himself before the throne, certain in his own mind that forgiveness on this holy Christmas morning will not be refused him; and if he has that, he feels he can laugh in the face of misfortune.

As he is musing thus in the moonlight on the poop of the *Niña*, a hand is laid gently on his shoulder, and looking round he finds himself face to face with Vicente Pinzon, the brother of the man who has so cruelly wronged him.

For a moment or two the men stand looking each other steadfastly in the face. Then Vicente timidly advances a hand.

The Admiral's is frankly extended to grasp it.

"I am his brother," says Vicente, "but indeed, indeed I have never wronged you even in thought."

"I believe you, Vicente, I believe you, for I can read truth in your eyes. I am bowed down with grief and sorrow, and yet am I much affected by this warm token of your friendship."

The tears are in Vicente's eyes.

"Most acutely," he says, "do I feel for you; and if anything I can do will in any way atone for my brother's defection, oh, Cristoval Colon, bid me do it, nay, but command me."

"Nothing I fear, good friend mine, can console me now. Between me and Heaven itself there seems to hang a cloud. I am broken and crushed in spirit. Everything seems ended. We have but one little ship now. If anything happens to that, then are we left here for ever. We will never see country nor home again. And, inasmuch as I believe that your brother may never reach Spain, all our discoveries are as naught, and I shall be handed down to posterity as the madman Colon."

"This will not be. Come, Admiral, I have even more courage than you now."

"True. True, good Vicente."

"Heaven will raise you up friends, and the *Pinta* will return. I have dreamt it thrice!"

"But see," he continues, "the day begins to break, and yonder, towards us, rising and falling on the moonlit sea comes a canoe, impelled by right sturdy oarsmen."

Nearer and nearer speeds the dark boat. And now Columbus brightens up.

"Why," he cries joyfully, it must be our good friend Guacanagiri himself."

Next moment the savage cacique—nay, but I will no

longer use that word "savage" as applied to this kindly-hearted man—the good cacique has rushed on board and stands with bowed head and tearful eyes before the Admiral.

He speaks in a language that Columbus cannot understand, but his gesture and tone leave not a doubt in the Admiral's heart that his sorrow is no mere pretence.

He raises the hand of Columbus and bows his head reverently over it, till brow and hand do touch.

"Behold! behold!" the graceful action seemed to say, "the wild chief Guacanagiri is your friend, and humble though he be, he and his people will do all in their power to assist you in this your hour of darkest need."

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For some hours before this the chief's people had been busy clearing the wreck, although their presence there could not be observed from the deck of the *Niña*.

So vexed and grief-stricken had Guacanagiri been when the Admiral's master-at-arms, Arana, brought him the terrible news of the shipwreck that he burst into tears, and for a time appeared quite overwhelmed with sorrow.

But he speedily awakened from the inactivity of grief, and now all his noble qualities come to the front. He summoned his chief men and bade them call the people. Small need to do that. They were all there already, but waiting the advent and orders of their king.

His speech to them was brief. It was a time for action, generous action, and not for words.

"My children," he said, "and you my chiefs, the Great Spirit has sent his own sons among us. It has pleased the Great Spirit to wreck and destroy one of the mighty ships close to our gates. The Spirit has done this to try us. These are not real men; they are Heaven-sent. But were they but mortal brothers and strangers it would be ours to treat them with kindness and with love. Go, then, get your

boats and fight with each other to save all that can be saved from out the wreck and from off the stormy waters of the awful reef. Go, my children, and you my brothers, go."

And, wonderful to relate, so well did Guacanagiri's men and officers work—the cacique and his family in the midst of them—that the day was not far spent ere all and everything, instruments, papers, specimens, furniture and effects, were not only taken on shore, but safely stored near the chief's own house, with an armed guard to watch over them.

But had that guard not been placed there, so honest were these simple natives, that probably not a thing would have been disturbed, even after darkness fell.

Nor did the chief's kindness and hospitality end here, for he placed several houses at the sole disposal of the shipwrecked men, and gave them all to understand that as long as they remained on the island they were his guests, and that they should want for neither food nor drink nor enjoyment.

That same evening, having seen everything done to his perfect satisfaction, the chief ate his dinner on board of the *Niña*.

Columbus was astonished at the man's innate dignity and decorum, and his almost civilized manners while at table. Without doubt he was a king all over and a noble man by very nature.

A strange, strange Christmas dinner this! A strange meeting on such a night! Truly it seemed prophetic. Surely it was the dawning of a new era. For here at this little table, in the persons of the great discoverer and this simple-minded king, the New and the Old World had met.

Perhaps some such thought as this came rushing to the mind of the Admiral himself, for he stood up, and stretching his hand across the festive board, once more grasped that of Guacanagiri.

"Peace on earth," he said solemnly. "Peace on earth, and good-will to men!"

Peace on earth? Reader, is that not the song that the angels sang?

CHAPTER XIII.

BUILDING A FORTRESS.

GUACANAGIRI was not slow to return the hospitality of Columbus, and as he had dined with the Admiral on board his caravel, so the Admiral must dine with the cacique in his palace at Guarico. Thus the two men may be said to have vied with each other in displays of hospitality, that were intended to cement and bind their hearts together in the newly-formed ties of friendship.

After the dinner at the palace—a repast of flesh and herbs and fruit, the most luscious that the island could boast of—Guacanagiri begged his vice-regal guest to retire with him into the gardens which surrounded his residence. Here, much to the delight and surprise of Columbus and the officers who were along with him, a great war-dance was given, in which nearly two thousand naked natives took part. After this games of strength and skill were played, and it was not until the sun went down and the fireflies began to flicker and dance among the trees that these were quite concluded.

But next day—not to be outdone in martial display—Columbus brought on shore with him many of his most skilled spearsmen and swordsmen, among them Will and Alard, and the dexterity with which these Britons used their weapons caused the cacique to marvel very much.

There were bowmen too among Columbus's men, and these astonished Guacanagiri still more; but like a skilled manager the Admiral kept his crowning triumph till the very last, when lombard guns, loaded with shrapnel, were fired.

Here thunder, lightning, and destruction were apparently all mingled together, and the effect upon the poor superstitious natives was wonderful. Had Columbus after this asserted that it was he alone who made the sea and the land, I do think that Guacanagiri and his people would not have doubted him.

While returning that same evening in company with Alard and Will, who acted as his body-guards, the Admiral took occasion to talk to both, for both were favourites, Will perhaps even more than Alard. He liked to draw the young fellows out, and nothing pleased him more than to hear them speak of their disdainful lady-loves.

"I am a much older man than you, Guillermo," said Columbus to-night, "and I know perhaps more of women and their ways, and believe me this disdain is no deeper than the skin."

"Do you think not, señor?" said Alard.

"I am sure of it; and what is more, it is in reality a sign of true love."

"Ah! your highness," said Alard, "you delight my heart, and as soon as I return to the shores of sunny Spain, I shall go and kneel at the feet of—"

"Nay, nay," cried Columbus laughing, "take my advice, let there be no kneeling. She has been disdainful, now let it be your turn. Pretend you have forgotten the saucy bird, and she will come round quickly enough."

"You believe this, señor?"

"Again I am sure of it, and if there be any kneeling to be done, why—what is her pretty name, my good Alard?"

"Nita."

"A sweet name in truth. Well, friend, Nita will do the kneeling."

"Ah! señor, I begin to wish I were back once more in dear Spain. I'd give my ears to see Nita kneeling."

"Heigh-ho!" sighed Will, "I do not wish to go back. You see, Señor Admiral," he added, as Columbus looked inquiringly at him, "my home is a bog in Ireland. My mother and sister live in a shieling, and share it with the sow. My lady-love, Bridget, lives in a shieling too, and her father keeps a cow; and it is true, señor, that both shielings put together would not make half so fine a house as one of the grass huts of these kind-hearted blacks. No, I would stay here and gather gold. In the mountains I am told it abounds. Oh, Admiral, why do you not leave quite a number of us, and when you come back we can go home in some of your big fine ships? For you will come back?"

"Yes, boy, yes. If I am fortunate enough to return to Spain, most assuredly will the Queen bid me sail again in command of a far finer fleet, and with many of her subjects who will come out as colonists.

"But," added the Admiral, "you have spoken well and wisely, and I will consider what you have said. Think you, Guillermo, are there many besides yourself would like to remain here for a time?"

"I will for one," cried Alard.

"And everyone I have spoken to says the same," said Will. "We are in a lovely land. It is all a delightful paradise. The people are kind, although they do not dress much more than Adam. We love them, and they love us. Let us stay."

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Christopher Columbus was not a man to despise a good idea because it happened to come from a humble source, and

the more he thought that night of Galway Will's proposal the better he liked it.

There would not only be very great inconvenience, but danger as well, in an attempt to cross the wide Atlantic at this uncertain season of the year, in so crowded a vessel as the shipping of all his crew would render the little *Niña*.

He doubted not for a moment that the proposal made by Galway Will emanated from the whole crew, or from those at all events who wished to stay in the country. Will had simply been chosen as spokesman. Well, it was better that the plan should have been proposed by the men. Had it come from him, the Admiral, it might have laid him open to the suspicion that he wished to desert his men, or to force some of them to accept exile.

But then there was the danger to be considered. Beautiful, enchanting even, though this rich and fertile country was, it was nevertheless a savage one. Guacanagiri himself, as well as the interpreters, had spoken with awe and with trembling of terrible raids, that had often been made by the natives of the Caribee Islands that lay further to the east and south. These men made war the chief study of their lives, and they carried war into the country of their more peaceful neighbours, not only that they might kill and slay for the mere lust of blood, but because they were cannibals and head-hunters.

Yet surely even this danger could be guarded against. So Columbus determined to build a strong fortress, and provision and arm it. If the cannibals did land, therefore, and attack his white men or their black allies, they should receive a lesson that would, no doubt, teach them to keep at a respectable distance in future.

Moreover, leaving a portion of his crew here would be to actually commence colonizing at once. They would teach good Guacanagiri's people how to till the earth, how to sow

and reap. They would teach them the arts of civilization and peace, and if need were, the arts of war as well—civilized warfare, let us say, if that be not a paradox.

There was something else besides that the men whom he left behind could do—namely, explore the country, and find out where the gold mines were. They could even collect gold, and a goodly portion of all they found Columbus determined should be their own property.

So next morning the Admiral went to see Guacanagiri once again, and began to unfold all his plans before him.

The good chief almost cried like a child with very delight when he heard the proposal of our hero. And that very morning these two representatives of the New and the Old World journeyed together to seek out a good position for the fortress. This was not difficult to find, and the building of the stronghold, which was named Navidad, or the Nativity, to commemorate the arrival of the Spaniards in this territory at the holy Christmas season, was commenced forthwith.

So willingly did Columbus's men, assisted by the active and willing natives, work, that the whole place was completed in about eight days.

Nor was it a weak fortress by any means. The Admiral would have nothing done by halves, so Fort Navidad had its vaults or cellars for stores and water, its sturdy walls, capable of resisting more strength than was ever likely to be brought against them, its ramparts, its ditch, and its drawbridge.

When it was completed, it was armed and manned. Then, by way of once more impressing the natives with the military might of Spain, a great field day was given, and the white men went through all the manœuvres entailed in attack and defence. Bows twanged, arrows flew, the guns were fired, scattering destruction among the trees, and

terrifying the poor natives; spears rattled and swords clashed, and at last a grand sortie was made from the fort, and the enemy was utterly scattered and routed.

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The fame of the fortress of Navidad was rumoured abroad, as well as the desire of the Admiral to possess himself of gold-dust and nuggets of gold, and to give away for this useless stuff wonderful beads and magic bells, that were declared to be *turey*, *turey*, *turey*, the gifts of Heaven or spirit-land.

So now everything seemed to be working together for the good of our hero and the furtherance of his great plans.

A night or two before the *Niña* left this newly-founded colony, Columbus gathered his people together, and appointed those who were to command.

All told, the men of the fort would number over forty souls. Among these were Diego d'Arana, Columbus's wife's cousin, and on him devolved the whole command, but in the event of his death, Pedro Gutierrez, the gentleman of the king's bed-chamber, was to succeed him. If he died, then the secretary Roderigo should take charge.

Among the men left behind were Alard and Galway Will, and also old Gabriel the story-teller, and Juan Doloroso, or Red-eyed Jack. This latter had volunteered to stay; not that he would not rather have gone to Spain, but there was that terrible sea to cross.

"You are a brave man," said Alard to him, "for thus staying with us here of your own free-will."

"But would you not rather be at home?" said Galway Will. "Poor Jack, you will miss your grandmother, you know."

Juan did not answer in words. He scratched his head thoughtfully and gazed wistfully over the sea, then he shook that head and sighed.

"Ah, Alard, my friend," cried Will laughing, "I know

what poor Jack wants. He wants his grandmother brought right over here; then he'll be happy."

"Well, do not weep, Jack, and you shall have your grandmother. I shall ask the Admiral to bring the dear old dame back with him when he comes."

After Columbus had settled everything to his own entire satisfaction, and to that of everyone else, he addressed the little colony in words of such pleading earnestness, that they sank deep into the hearts of all who heard them, causing many to shed tears.

He especially counselled strict obedience to command, and honesty, truthfulness, and carefulness in dealing with the poor innocent natives. These men, he said, deemed them Heaven-sent, and he himself believed now that God had permitted their ship to be wrecked that this first colony should be founded. He prayed his people to remember this, and to conduct themselves as if they were indeed the sons of the Lord by adoption.

They had everything they could desire to make them comfortable within the fort. They had tradesmen of every sort, and artificers, and he had even left with them seeds to cultivate in their own gardens, so that on the whole their lives ought to be happy and almost idyllic.

He assured them that he would make all haste to come back, and found even a larger colony, and that if they, the first settlers, were faithful and true to their sovereigns and to the cross he had set on yonder hill, great indeed would be their reward not only in this world, but in the world beyond death and the grave.

Then he prayed with them and blessed them, even as a father blesses his children.

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Poor faithful Guacanagiri was in great grief when the hour of parting came. Again and again he essayed to

speak. Again and again the rising tears choked him. He could but press the kind Admiral's hand, and bend his brow to touch it; then stand there in the midst of his simple people, staring after the boat that bore Columbus to the *Niña*, dumb and stupid with the great cold sorrow that now enshrouded him as summer storms obscure the sky.

And the parting between the seamen was sad indeed. Many wept as they embraced each other, and whispered messages of love and affection to be delivered to the dear ones far away.

And so with cheers and tears the parting was effected. Then the *Niña* sailed away.

"Ah! little thought they 'twas their last."

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It was the sixth of January, fourteen hundred and ninety-three. The *Niña* had been two days at sea now, and had got but a little distance past a point of land they called Monte Christi, for the wind had gone round to the east and detained them. That forenoon, however, it blew more off the land, and the little *Niña* had fairly good way on her at last.

Towards sunset, the breeze blowing once more in a contrary direction, they were beating eastwards round a point of land when suddenly there was a joyous shout from the man on the outlook.

"*Pinta* bearing down on us, Señor Admiral."

The *Pinta!* This was indeed a glad surprise for Columbus.

The *Pinta* soon shortened sail, so that it was evident enough her commander had repented his desertion, or, at all events, as we already know, had determined to make the best of a bad business.

Owing to the unsettled state of the weather there was no chance of holding satisfactory communication at sea, so the *Niña* put back into a little bay near Cape Monte Christi, followed by the *Pinta*.

Arrived in the bay, anchors were let go, and soon after followed that memorable interview betwixt Columbus and Pinzon which is historical. The great navigator listened to every word the captain of the *Pinta* had to say, but he said scarcely anything in return, and it was evident enough to Pinzon that his story was not credited, and that henceforth a cloud, which could never be dispelled, must rest between the Admiral and him.

This was scarcely the kind of reception that the astute business man had calculated on, but he was bound to put up with it, and to bow acquiescence when Columbus told him they should now, in company, bear up for Spain.

They then took in water, fresh provisions, and wood at the mouth of a great river, which the Admiral named the Rio del Oro, or River of Gold, for gold was found even among the sands thereof.

Still coasting eastwards they came to one of the first rivers that Pinzon had visited, and here people came to complain that they had been robbed of their sons and daughters, and that these were probably even now on board the *Pinta*.

"We shall see," said Columbus sternly, and a boat was called away.

There was an ugly cloud on the brow of Pinzon when he saw the Admiral step on board, and noted whom he had along with him. Columbus quickly told his business, and ordered Pinzon to at once land the people he had kidnapped in his own boat.

Fain would Pinzon have demurred, and in his inmost soul he wished the Admiral dead where he stood. Nevertheless, although high and haughty words passed between these two navigators, the command was finally obeyed, and the kidnapped people were landed.

Then Columbus bowed stiffly and took his departure. The breach was widened.

"By our Lady," cried Pinzon, wildly striking the table as he sat talking to his brother after this event—"By our Lady, as soon as we reach Spanish shores, I will challenge this haughty upstart to combat, and the heart's blood of either him or me shall dye the sands."

CHAPTER XIV.

STORM.

THE crews of the *Pinta* and the *Niña* were not a whit less superstitious when sailing homewards than they had been while outward-bound, only they now knew the different species of dangers they would have to encounter, and like brave men—which after all it must be admitted they were—they resolved to face them without a murmur.

Columbus himself was just a little nervous over the return voyage as well as his men, and considering all the toil and worry he had undergone, and his many sleepless nights, this is certainly not to be wondered at.

Neither of the vessels was in an over-trustworthy condition, and it might go bad with one or both if they had a long battle to fight with storms and gales.

Apart, too, from the signs and wonders that our mariner had lately noticed in the sky, he had seen something else, and so too had most of his crew.

They had seen sirens or mermaids.

I do not think that the sailors knew which they were. Never having been introduced to these aquatic ladies, who sit on rocks singing and combing their long hair, with the lower and fish portion of their bodies paddling in the water, I am not sure if I myself could tell at a glance which is

which. The sirens I believe are vixens at heart, though fair of face. It is they who sit and sing when they see a poor Jacky-tar's boat coming along round the point. Jack, of course, stops to listen, and rows nearer and nearer; then, seeing nothing more dangerous than a fair damsel on a rock dressed in brown sea-weed, he makes bold to address her, when, lo and behold! she at once changes into a frightful fiend, seizes the poor sailor and plunges into the sea with him. As Jack himself never returns to tell any tales, I am not in a position to state how he fares when he gets to the bottom of the ocean, though I fear it is but poorly.

On the other hand, from all I have heard, a mermaid is a somewhat more mildly-dispositioned sea-nymph, who seldom goes the length of seizing Jack and eloping with him *nolens volens*. She is rather shy than otherwise, and modest too.

It occurs to me, however, that the creatures Columbus and his crew saw several times rising from the water, and gazing at them with large liquid eyes, and waving their arms aloft, must have been dugongs.

Yet, there they were, and they seemed to bode the mariners no good.

Talking to Sancho Ruiz the pilot that evening, something reminded them both that in five days' time there would be an eclipse of the sun, and no doubt terrible storms to follow.

"Yes," said Ruiz, "and perhaps, señor, these mermaids that we thought so fearsome and ugly were sent to warn us. I think, Señor Admiral, it would be advisable to take shelter somewhere until the eclipse is past."

But the Admiral shook his head.

"I do not believe, my good Ruiz," he said, "that storms are always the concomitants of eclipses. I am now very anxious to get home, although I should much like to visit the islands whereon the Amazonian warriors live, and pro-

bably take one or two home to Spain as a present for our sovereign lady."

Shortly after this conversation a bold and lofty headland was passed. The land trended a little way directly south now, and so the *Niña* was kept away more before the wind, which was blowing from north-west, and soon they found themselves in a broad and lovely gulf or bay.

The temptation to explore this new territory was too great to resist, so after sailing on up the gulf till they could just perceive the high land at the head thereof—for the Admiral at first imagined that the bay must be a channel dividing Española (San Domingo) from another island—both vessels were brought to anchor close inshore.

A glance at the map will show that they were now lying in the Bay of Samana.

Columbus himself went on shore with a well-armed boat's crew, for the natives, by whom he soon found himself surrounded, exhibited no fear of the white men. They were indeed a wild-looking and haughty race, bedecked with feathers, and armed not only with terrible war-clubs, but with swords and bows and arrows as well. Their skins were very black, and their long straight hair was tied in queues and adorned with the feathers of parrots and other birds.

Columbus, however, exhibited no concern, but presenting some of them, who appeared to be chiefs, with beads and bells, invited them to come on board the ship.

Only one savage cacique was bold enough to accept this invitation. Columbus sent this chief on shore again in a boat commanded by Ruiz, and with orders to purchase bows and arrows as specimens.

Now, nothing excites the suspicion of real savages more than an attempt to deprive them of their arms, whether by barter or otherwise. Columbus, from the poop of the *Niña*,

was watching the actions of the natives with some distrust. Suddenly he saw a large body of these dark warriors issue with terrible war-cries from the bush, and make a dash for the beach. Ruiz quickly formed his men in line, and boldly they stood their ground and repelled the attack, severely wounding two of the Indians.

Next day, however, the Indians with their greatest chief returned to the beach, and peace was restored, while many presents once more exchanged hands.

The natives now did nothing but laugh about the skirmish of the day before, treating it as lightly as Irishmen of our day would a faction fight at a fair.

These were not Carib Indians, however, as Columbus at first thought, judging from their fearless demeanour and from the weapons they carried. But they were a hardy mountain clan, as different in type and in manners and customs from Guacanagiri's peaceful race, as Rob Roy M'Gregor's Highlanders differed from the natives of the Saut Market of Glasgow.

Some of these savages offered to conduct the ships of Columbus to the Carib Islands, and their services were accepted. With such alacrity did they volunteer their services, that I cannot help believing they did so to curry favour with the cannibals, feeling sure that every white man would quickly be killed and eaten.

However this may be, neither the savages nor the white men touched at the islands of the Caribs, so if anyone was to be eaten, the feast at all events was deferred for another voyage.

For, a fair wind springing up after sailing for a short time towards the Caribees, the course was altered more to the east, and, very much indeed to their joy, our mariners now found themselves at long last homeward-bound.

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The unlucky *Pinta* now began to give the Admiral no little concern. She was not only leaking like a sieve, but her main-mast was sprung.

The trade-winds were blowing, too, and so the ships had to beat through rough and chafing seas. But seas always seem rough when one is tacking to windward.

The force of the wind ere long fell considerably, but this, although it made matters somewhat more pleasant on board, hindered rather than helped the speed of their passage homeward. It was unsafe to carry any pressure of sail upon the main-mast of the *Pinta*, so that the *Niña*, after forging some miles ahead, had frequently to wait until the sister ship came up.

These light and baffling winds continued right into the month of February, by which time the caravels had managed to creep north and away from the region of the trades, and more favouring breezes began to blow. But now provisions began to run short, although the biscuits held out. They had frequently to depend for food upon fish that they caught, and this mode of living being very precarious, the Admiral's anxiety was much increased.

The zigzag course, too, had been so puzzling to the pilots that they quite lost their reckoning. It had been daily worked out by Columbus himself, which proves how thorough a master and sailor he was, leaving nothing to those under him which he could do himself, if the safety of the ship was to any degree connected therewith.

According to the authority Las Casas, while even the captain of the *Niña* supposed the ship to be in the latitude of Madeira, Columbus knew well they were nearly in that of the Azores; but he contradicted no one, preferring that even Vicente Pinzon should have an erroneous impression of the voyage, so that the correct sailings to and from the newly-discovered islands should be in his possession alone.

That was a busy and an anxious night with the crew of the little *Niña*, when after sunset great storm-clouds began to bank up in the north-east, when the sea rose higher than the mariners had ever seen it, and a head-wind began to moan and shriek in fitful gusts through the rigging and cordage.

The vessel was far too light now, and badly ballasted, and thus the buffeting and twisting she would receive among the angry waves might reopen every leak and cause her to founder. Even now, though darkness had not yet fallen nor the storm-clouds obscured all the sky, she was tossed about on the water like an empty nut-shell, and steering became a matter of great difficulty indeed.

Columbus was equal to this emergency at all events, whatever else might happen. He caused, therefore, the wine-casks to be filled with sea-water and lashed below so as to act as ballast.

It no doubt fared quite as badly with the people on board the *Pinta*, but it was *sauve qui peut*, each ship for itself now.

With the darkness and the blackness of the clouds that seemed to brood over the deep, the wind increased momentarily in violence. All sail was taken in, hardly a rag being left aloft, and the vessel went scudding before the gale, literally under bare poles.

Columbus himself never left the deck, and was usually to be found near to the men at the helm, a position of very great danger, which he was far too brave to shirk.

When the morning of the 14th broke hazily over the awful turmoil and tumult of the raging waves, the horizon seemed close aboard of them on all sides, and so low did the dark and threatening clouds descend, that the top-masts seemed to touch them.

The wind had now gone down slightly, and some of the

tired and weary mariners were enabled to snatch a little rest. Even Columbus lay down for an hour or two. Everything now appeared to depend upon his clear judgment and upon his strength.

But in the forenoon watch the south wind was blowing again, and this time almost a hurricane. It increased rather than abated towards nightfall, and no one on board the *Niña* ever expected to see the morning light. And the marvel is that, exposed to so fearful a gale of wind, the ill-shaped crank little craft did not founder long before the middle watch was ended.

Imagine if you can the horrors of this terrible storm to the crew of a tiny boat like the *Niña*. The men who are obliged to be on duty have lashed themselves to the masts, to the rigging, or even to bolts, for the waves leap high above the stern and go curling over the poop, or now and then, when the half-drowned wretches at the helm let her fall off somewhat, and she partially broaches to, and leans over till she is almost on her beam-ends, the merciless seas shrieking in the wind break clean over her, as she lies helpless and quivering in the trough of the ocean. Not on her, mind you, but over her, falling like a cataract on the other side, the solid portion of the water quite burying her for a time, and drowning the cries of the men, who cannot but think that all is over and all is lost.

And this in darkness intense. Not one glimmer of light from the pitchy sky, the very lantern-lights extinguished on board, and only the ghostly glimmer of the breaking water, that shows where each mountain wave-top is, now high above them, now down beneath. The caravel is tossed into the air one moment and descends the next like a bolt into the black abyss below.

Imagine the howling of the wind through the rigging and cordage, it is like the raging of a den of wild beasts

in the depths of some tropical forest. A fitful, deafening, savage roar. And the cold, too, is so intense that the men on deck are partially benumbed and almost asleep on their lashings.

Such was the tumult of the storm; but a mental tumult too was raging in the breast of our hero. For himself he cared little. He knew that at some time or other he should have to pay the debt of nature. He had faced death many times and oft before. But it was bitter, bitter to think that, after spending his whole life in a struggle to get this enterprise taken up, after encountering dangers innumerable in the attempt to fulfil his mission, after bringing it to a glorious conclusion, he and all the fruits of his labours should perish thus and never more be heard of. And then his poor wife and his sons at Cordova to be left destitute and fatherless! Ah, this was the greatest grief of all!

But surely, he thought, God, who had protected him so long and guided him through so many dangers, would not let him perish thus.

All through that terrible night, then, there raged the storm without and the storm within; and when day began to slowly dawn at last, and there was just light enough to see to write, Columbus found his way to the cabin and scribbled on a piece of parchment a brief account of the islands he had discovered, and their latitude and longitude. This was inclosed in wax and headed up in a cask which was thrown overboard.

His mind was slightly relieved after this.

The dawn spread and spread. Then from a fierce, saturnine glare through a rift of cloud low on the eastern horizon the mariners knew that day had dawned. The force of the gale had by this time spent itself, though the seas were still mountains high and of sufficient force to almost sweep the decks.

A seaman managed now to crawl up into the main-top. His first cry was that the *Pinta* was nowhere to be seen. Columbus gave her up for lost. Without doubt Pinzon had gone to his doom.

The next shout was a loud and excited one. It was a shout of land! Could they reach it? It seemed but about five leagues away as nearly as could be judged. And if they could but once get under the lee of it all might yet be well.

But the wind changed, blowing now more from the east, with a point or two of north in it. The sea continued high and cross, so that it was quite impossible to keep the vessel clear of water, and all but futile to attempt to bale.

For two days and two nights more they tossed about, and all that time they were in sight not of one island but of two.

The captain of the ship and even the pilots thought they were somewhere off the coast of Spain or France. Columbus knew better. These were undoubtedly the most southerly of the Azores, St. Maria and Formiga.

Poor Columbus! One does really pity him as he gets at last near enough to St. Mary's Isle to anchor. He looks haggard, thin, and old. For nights on nights he has had no sleep, and hardly any food for a week, and he is in dire pain too with the gout, brought on by exposure to cold and wet.

Was he not a hero?

But surely his troubles are over now for a time. He will be joyfully received at St. Mary's, a Portuguese island though it be. He will receive food and drink, and be sent on his voyage rejoicing.

So, although the ship pitches and pulls at her anchorage, he gets a little sleep to-night, and wakes at early dawn refreshed and hopeful.

CHAPTER XV.

SAFE IN PORT—MISERABLE END OF PINZON.

A STRANGE sight indeed to witness! It may be as well to say at once that there were but few houses on the side of the island opposite to which the Admiral had anchored the *Niña*. And yet crowds of people had no doubt assembled to wonder and gaze at the bold little craft that had been preserved, as if by a miracle, through all that terrible storm and tempest, a tempest that had unroofed the frail cottages of the Portuguese, had uprooted trees, hurled down rocks, stripped the climbing flowers from around arbours and verandahs, reduced young foliage to blackened pulp, and sent showers of barmy ocean spume scudding across the island.

A strange sight! Was the Admiral mad? the people must have queried. And had the dangers they had just escaped turned the heads of all his crew also?

For, lo and behold! a boat lands from the caravel, and next minute, two and two, there are marching towards a chapel some distance off, more than half a score of sailors, with nothing on but their shirts.

It is quite true. There they were bare-headed, bare-legged, and with the cool wind of a February morning whistling round their extremities. Their heads were bent, their hands were folded, and very solemn they looked! It would have taken a good deal to have made those Spanish sailors laugh just then. And I do not wonder at it.

I daresay, however, that the onlookers appeared considerably amused as well as thunderstruck, and did such a procession take place in our day anywhere on the shores of

England, I believe our little English boys would have some droll remarks to make *à propos*.

What did it mean? A question easily answered. The Admiral and crew of the *Niña*, when the great gale of wind was at its height, had vowed that if spared they would walk naked thus to some chapel and offer up thanksgivings to the Virgin for their wonderful deliverance.

And these men were now fulfilling that vow. When they had said their prayers they would return on board the caravel, and the Admiral himself with the other half of the crew would land and do likewise.

But, alas! the strange rite was doomed to have a strange ending. The priest was there to confess them; but hardly had the poor, shivering fellows commenced to pray ere loud shouts were heard without, the tramp of galloping horses, hoarse words of command, and the clanging and rattle of arms. Next minute the men found themselves prisoners.

The explanation is not far to seek. The reader will remember that before they left the Canary Isles on their outward voyage the mariners had been warned that three war caravels belonging to the Portuguese were in pursuit of something or somebody, and that Columbus was very uneasy until he got fairly away to sea. He believed then that the King of Portugal had determined at all hazards to delay his enterprise, piqued that any foreign discovery should not be made on his account.

Such it seems was really the case; and furthermore, orders had been sent to the governors of the Azores Islands to detain Columbus wherever he turned up.

When, therefore, the *Niña* hove in sight the governor of St. Maria endeavoured to entice the Admiral on shore by sending him on the previous evening presents of fowls and wine and bread, and hoping to see him next day. The men who brought these gifts were detained all night on the

caravel, it not being safe for them to land owing to the heaviness of the seas. But they landed next morning, and quickly sped with news to the governor, that Columbus and his men were to pay their vows at the chapel. Hence the capture of the poor, naked mariners, the governor believing that one of them must be the Admiral himself.

Had he waited until the first batch returned and the other came on shore he would have been successful, and possessed himself of the greatest prize that Portugal could possibly have had.

Foiled in his attempts, he now came to the beach and with armed boats shoved off with the intention of capturing the caravel. But Columbus had been an observer of the treachery, and was quite prepared to defend himself.

The affair ended with a mere logomachy, or war of words.

That same day the Admiral was obliged to trip his anchors and put to sea with only half his crew. An attempt to reach St. Miguel failed, and in two days' time he returned to St. Maria, and after a great deal of parleying the prisoners were released and peace was made. In other words, the governor of St. Maria was foiled. His name was Juan de Casteñado, but there is not the slightest occasion to remember it.

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One morning early in March the *Niña* staggered into the mouth of the Tagus, and dropped anchor opposite Rostello.

This was not Spain certainly, and Columbus had been very unwilling indeed to shelter in a Portuguese river, but he had no alternative. He had encountered another fearful storm and another fearful night at sea. Everybody on board was sick and sore. This may not be very classical English, but as a sailor, I can assure you the words are as capable of expressing the state of those poor fellows' feelings on that memorable fourth of March as any other.

Tired almost to death, faint, sleepy, nervous, and wretched, not a bone in their bodies that would not be aching, while their minds would be for a time almost blank. Gradually, however, joy would take the place of every other sentiment, dominating even the natural fear and distrust they had of their hereditary enemies the Portuguese. Were they not at anchor at last? Had they not escaped all their perils, all the terrible dangers of the wide and raging ocean? To look back through the long, weary, toilsome weeks that were now gone was like courting the memory of a protracted and hideous dream.

Yes, they were safe, and they were thankful. Perhaps there was not a man in all that ship, whose thoughts did not rise in grateful adoration to Him who rules on earth and sea, as the anchor dropped into the water.

Not far off lay a ship of war belonging to Portugal, and for a time the captain of her must have been considerably puzzled what to make of the sadly battered caravel, with her strange square rig and her wave-washed sides. But he sent an officer to board her and to summon her commander before him.

With as much grace as he could assume, for his soul still chafed at the ungenerous reception he had received at St. Maria, Columbus informed this officer who and what he was, and politely declined either going himself to pay his respects to the Portuguese captain or sending a substitute.

The message of the Admiral put things on a very different footing, however, and the summoner looked upon himself as the summoned and immediately paid Columbus a visit.

The news of the *Niña's* arrival spread like wild-fire, and soon the Tagus was crowded with boats of every description. The Admiral was indeed the hero of the hour, and the excitement he caused would have sufficed to have turned the head of many a man with a less steadily balanced mind.

Columbus now lost no time in despatching a courier to the court of Spain, to announce his safe arrival in Europe, and explain the reasons why he did not come straight on to Palos.

When the King of Portugal heard of the arrival of the great navigator, and of the wonderful discoveries he had made, although feeling considerable pique and chagrin that his country would not reap the advantages thereof—despite the fact that he had been the first to whom Columbus's services had been offered — he lost no time in doing all honour to so distinguished an arrival on his shores.

He sent envoys to the *Niña*. Columbus and his people were requested to consider themselves entirely the guests of Portugal, and whatsoever they desired from shore they were to have at the government's expense. Meanwhile the Admiral himself was invited to repair immediately to the court, and tell the king his wonderful story.

Our hero, although distrusting King John II., and more particularly his courtiers, did not hesitate to obey the order, and set out, therefore, on his journey accompanied by one of his own officers.

He was received with the greatest pomp and with the highest honours. But among these very courtiers who now made so much of Columbus—or pretended to—for the few days he remained at court in Portugal, were some of the men who had in former days ridiculed his great scheme for the discovery of a new route to India. For a time these fellows were considerably nonplussed. But they rallied at last, and told the king that the very islands which Columbus had discovered were some of those which already belonged to Portugal, and that this Spanish Admiral had merely found out a shorter route to them. He was a dangerous man, they added, and might eventually bring about war between Spain and Portugal, if his career were not quickly checked.

One of these courtiers of King John even suggested, that

the quickest and most certain way to check his career would be to remove him. The king well knew that assassination was meant, but refused point-blank to give countenance to so vile a suggestion.

Then the courtiers changed their tactics. At anyrate, they said, the Spaniards had not yet colonized the newly-found territory. The king ought, therefore, to despatch a fleet in all haste, and take possession of islands to which they really believed he had the best right. And the king thought this plan feasible enough. Such was the corruptness of courts in those days long gone by.

As soon as he got quite clear of King John and his pretty courtiers, the Admiral hastened back to the Tagus, and got up anchor with all possible despatch.

In less than two days' time he had once more crossed the bar at Saltes, and dropped anchor at Palos.

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Wonders never cease. And we must now return for a very brief space to the *Pinta*, and chronicle the adventures of Captain Pinzon. The story is far too sad to dwell long on, and yet it must be told.

On that terrible night, then, when the little *Niña* was so nearly foundering in the wild storm off the Azores, the *Pinta* fared but very little better. Pinzon, however, to do him justice, was an excellent and fearless navigator, and he succeeded in saving his ship. But she was sadly battered, and when the wind changed, was beaten back far across the Atlantic. Seeing no signs of the *Niña* on the morning after the great gale, he naturally enough came to the conclusion that she had sunk with all hands.

"I cannot say that I am sorry," he told his brother. "Haughtiness generally goes before a fall."

"Things seem to work together for our good," replied Francisco.

"Yes, and fools we should be not now to take the advantage of them. We are not robbing Columbus. You cannot rob the dead. Besides, am I not the discoverer of Española? Even allowing that the Admiral was head of the expedition, have we not always been his right arm, my brother?"

"True, true."

"And his clever seamanship resulted in the loss of the *Santa Maria!*"

"And now he goes down in the *Niña!*"

"Well, it but remains with us to make all sail for Spain, and report our grand discoveries."

"Unluckily," said Francisco, "we can carry but little sail."

"We may be all the safer on this very account, Francisco; and, at all events, we seem now to have no rival."

And so the Pinzons of the *Pinta* made the best of their way towards Europe.

They encountered another fearful gale in the Bay of Biscay—the same gale had almost sunk the *Niña*—but, weathering it, reached Bayonne in safety.

Captain Pinzon lost no time now in addressing a letter to the court of Castile. In this he gave a long account of the discoveries, especially that of Española (or San Domingo), the honour of which certainly devolved on him. He forgot to add that he first had the honour of basely deserting his gallant Admiral, and all for the greed of gold. He dwelt upon the loss of the *Santa Maria*, half-hinted that this was caused through bad seamanship, and bewailed the loss also of the overcrowded *Niña*, which, he said, must have foundered in the gales that raged on the 14th and 15th of February. He concluded by informing their majesties that as soon as he could take in food and water for his nearly famished crew, he should sail for Palos, and there await further orders.

And neither Alonzo Pinzon nor his younger brother, Francisco, doubted for a moment now that the ball was at their feet, and that nothing but honour, riches, and glory awaited them on their advent in Spain.

So they were both anxious to start, and when stores and water were taken on board, they tripped anchor and stood away south.

Over the bar of Saltes they sail. They are seen, of course. Yet nothing like the crowds which they had expected are yonder on the shore to meet them.

"This is strange, indeed," says the elder Pinzon. "Surely we have not been expected! Can our letter to their majesties have miscarried?"

"It may have been delayed," replies Francisco; but he speaks doubtfully. There is a strange shade of anxiety on his face, and there is a look of trouble in the face of Alonzo too.

It is eventide. The sun is sinking in the west in a bed of orange light and glory. The woods are green with spring's earliest tints. There is a dreamy haze over hill and forest. The evening breeze is very light, but hark! what sounds are those borne along on its wings?

"Oh, Francisco!" cries Alonzo, "those are joy-bells. And listen to that shout! Some hero has come."

"Brother, brother," exclaims Francisco, "that hero is Columbus, and we are ruined!"

Amidst the acclamations of a rejoicing people the great mariner was returning from church. So exclusive was the enthusiasm for him, that there was hardly a shout of welcome to spare for the poor Pinzons, although their own personal friends crowded around them and hailed them with many a loving embrace and hand-grasp, as those they had long considered dead.

But Alonzo Pinzon took but little heed. He was a

crushed and broken-hearted man from this hour; and as soon as possible he returned to his own home, pleading illness as the cause of his inability to meet Columbus. Nor did he appear again until our hero left Palos.

Meanwhile a letter from his sovereigns arrived. They expressed no desire to see him. This was the last and the most crushing blow of all to Martin Alonzo Pinzon. He had been weak and ailing before. He was ill now. He took to his bed, and in a very short time he breathed his last.

There were those who said he took poison. We must look on the brighter side of the picture, and believe that disappointment and worry, and I may add sorrowful repentance of an evil deed done in a hasty moment, perhaps were quite enough to bring on the bodily illness that speedily terminated his earthly career.

His sad history, however, may teach a lesson that no one who has his way to make in life can afford to forget, how one little step in the wrong direction, one slight divergence from the path of rectitude is sufficient to lead the bravest and best of men astray, and land them at last in the quagmires of ruin and disgrace.

They tell us that Columbus himself shed a tear when he heard of the sad end of the captain of the *Pinta*. If this be so—and who shall doubt it?—surely we cannot refuse the tribute of a sigh for the untimely fate of this truly brave and clever man. It might have been all so different!

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The courier sent by Columbus to the Spanish court must have arrived about the same time as Pinzon's letter. It is no wonder, therefore, that the latter was cast in the shade.

There was no bombast about the Admiral's communication, no boasting—he gave God all the glory of his great discoveries—no boasting, and no imputation of blame to

anyone. It did but express facts, in a modest and most unassuming way. But as Isabella the Queen read it, with glad flushed face and sparkling eyes, she could read in every line of it one great truth—Christopher Columbus had done his duty.

And she had sent him. Yes, the expedition was hers. And Columbus was her especial hero. He was: "Don Cristoval Colon, our Admiral of the Ocean Sea, Viceroy and Governor of all the islands discovered in the Indies."

And these words were indeed the superscription on a letter brought to Columbus one morning at La Rabida by his loving and faithful friend Marchena. The letter contained a command to the Admiral to repair to court, and in person tell the queen all the wonderful story of his wanderings and his adventures.

Marchena and the old governor of La Rabida, Juan Perez,[1] had been among the first to welcome Columbus on board the *Niña*, and to accompany him to the little church on the hill-top, that he might confess his sins and return thanks to Heaven for all his marvellous mercies.

After this they simply ran away with Columbus. He was to be their particular guest for a few nights at all events.

And a more happy *tableau vivant* than that of the great discoverer,—seated in the evening with the firelight shining on his silvery hair and noble face, surrounded by the wondering monks, as he tells his simple but astonishing story,—I cannot for the life of me conceive.

[1] Many writers have confused the old guardian of La Rabida, Juan Perez, with the young and learned monk Antonio de Marchena, and speak of the two as but one—Perez de Marchena. Columbus himself, according to the authority of Navarrete and Las Casas, leads us to infer that he was, both on his first and second visits, indebted for kindness to the two men.

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COLUMBUS TELLS HIS STORY TO THE MONKS

CHAPTER XVI.

HONOURS.

I AM going to pass over the meeting of Columbus with his beautiful wife and his two rejoicing and happy boys. Knowing all we do of the Admiral's loving and gentle nature, and how even in hours of greatest peril and danger, his thoughts always wandered back to Spain and all the dear ones at home, we can easily imagine what a joyous, gladsome reunion that must have been, and so pass on without comment to his reception at the court of Spain.

It will be remembered that Ferdinand himself had always harboured doubts as to the feasibility of Columbus's great proposals, and that, had it rested with him and the councillors to whom he was only too pleased to listen, Christopher Columbus would never have been despatched from Spain, and the honour of the discoveries would have fallen to some other nation, possibly to France. But the Queen had always been the friend of Columbus, and now she had her hour of triumph, which, woman-like, I have no doubt she made the very most of.

I should have liked to have seen Isabella's face as, after reading Columbus's letter—she was certain to read it first herself—she quietly handed it across the table to Ferdinand, and sat watching him while he read it. What pride, joy, and triumph it must have expressed! For there is nothing in all the wide world a woman likes better than having a hero all to herself.

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Columbus's reception at court was everything that a great man could have wished or desired. Indeed it was more

than he desired, for modesty was one of the most charming traits in the character of our hero.

The court was at this time in Barcelona. But the Admiral had gone first to Seville. And here what may be called his first great triumph awaited him. He was now a nation's hero, and his entry into Seville on Palm Sunday was really a triumphal march. It was also a show. People of all nations have always loved shows.

Columbus's procession was headed by cavalry, with bands playing. The trophies he had brought with him from far over the sea, and that he had taken so much care of—skins of birds, beautiful feathers, spears, bows and arrows, girdles, and plumes—were borne aloft by servants, while strange and noisy bright-winged parrots, not at all put out of countenance by the shouting and uproar, perched upon the seamen's fingers or shoulders, and gave a foreign colouring to the procession by screaming their very loudest and wildest.

Then came Columbus himself, over whom acclamations rent the air, and with him many of his chief officers and friends, and last, and certainly not least in the people's estimation, came the Indians, armed according to their country's custom.

When Columbus went to Barcelona a still greater triumph was his, and higher honours were accorded to him. The streets were so thronged that his progress was greatly impeded, and the King and Queen, with their young son, the prince, had to wait for him in vain for a considerable time. Just for the time being, the people had claimed him. He belonged to the people even more—so they thought—than to the sovereigns, so they shouted themselves hoarse over him, and praised him and blessed him aloud. There was never such a man before! Never such a hero! There was calmness, almost kingly dignity, in every turn of his noble head, in every gesture, in his snow-white beard and com-

manding stature. Bravo the victor! Bravo Cristoval Colon! Bravo the viceroy!

Ah! reader, there is nothing so delightful as well-merited success. But still amid all these triumphs no doubt the mind of Columbus reverted to two scenes in his life that were very different indeed from that which now surrounded him. And both these scenes were laid in Seville. He could well remember that dreary night when, after leaving his little son Diego with the kind-hearted monks of La Rabida, he had come into Seville in the dusk of the evening, a weary, hungry, penniless tramp, with hardly enough clothing on his body to shield him from the biting winter winds. He could well remember that other night, long years after, when, repulsed in his attempts to get another hearing at court, he stood in the streets of Seville, bent with a weight of care and sorrow he could scarce support, and jeered by boys and roughs, who pointed their fingers at him, and shouted "Day-dreamer!" and "Madman!"

But all this was ended now, and perhaps in this great cheering crowd, so carried away by their enthusiasm that hardly could he pass along, were some of the very people who had formerly jeered and hooted "the old mad sailor."

Two things Columbus always possessed, and these had led him to this triumph. One was the courage of his convictions; the other, a faith in Heaven that was as pure and simple as that of a little child.

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The throne of the King and Queen was stationed in a great public hall, and under a beautiful coloured silken canopy. Around the throne stood all the pomp and wealth and state of Spain; while the hall itself was crowded with the beauty and *élite* of the best cities of the kingdom.

Heralded like a king himself, the noble person of Columbus was at last seen entering, and for a few minutes there was

not a sound to be heard in that great crowd, as he marched on towards the stage and throne. His commanding carriage, his flowing beard and white hair, and his robes of state gave to the man more the appearance of some patriarch of old than that of a simple sailor.

There was nothing of the sycophant about Columbus, but as he approached his sovereigns he bent the knee to kiss their hands.

They had both left the throne, and smilingly advanced a step to meet him, and now they raised him from the stooping posture, and, greatest honour of all, caused him to be seated in the royal presence, while he unfolded his charts and told the graphic tale of his great voyage and his grand discoveries.

There were a few moments of even deeper silence than had yet pervaded the hall when the simple but touching story was concluded. The Queen's lips were seen to move as if thanking Columbus, then the tears gushed to her eyes, and she and the king arose—but to kneel down, all the people following their example, and to return thanks to God for the great honour and glory He had brought on Spain through the instrumentality of his servant now before them.

The *Te Deum* was now chanted, raising all thoughts to Heaven. And thus concluded one of the most impressive scenes ever witnessed in old Spain.

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Among the great crowd that filled the hall that day, were some who afterwards played a part for good or for bad in the subsequent history that had been commenced by Spain.

Columbus had his friends and admirers in that hall, but he had also his enemies and his detractors.

Las Casas was there. He was then a young man of little over twenty, but the story of Columbus had fired his ambition and kindled his enthusiasm, and he became after-

wards not only the friend of truth in every shape, and the truest biographer of the great man and all his doings, but a faithful churchman and hater of all oppression, whether carried on against poor simple Indians or slaves.

Another historian of Columbus was also here. Let us simply call him Oviedo. He was at this time but a lad, but he knew the young sons of Columbus, and was, like Diego, a page at court. His history of the Indies is interesting, though not always reliable, and he was certainly not a man with the same kindly feelings as Bartolomé Las Casas was.

A good friend to our hero who was present on the day of his great triumph was Pedro de Mendoza, Archbishop of Toledo, and uncle of the celebrated Duke of Medina Celi, the latter an old friend of Columbus. After the ceremony of presentation, the court conducted the Admiral to the house of the cardinal, and he became his guest during his stay at Barcelona.

I shall only mention the names of two other men who stood there that day and witnessed the reception of Columbus by his sovereign.

One was Juan de Fonseca, Archdeacon of Seville, a bitter enemy to our hero. Had not Christopher Columbus himself been the cynosure of all eyes at the time their majesties raised him from the kneeling position, and seated him beside them, many might have noticed the proud and envious lips of Fonseca curled in scorn, as this great act of condescension and honour was done to the poor weaver's son.

The other was a bold and fearless young fellow that you shall hear more of presently. His name was Ojeda—Alonzo de Ojeda, if you must have it in full; and there certainly is a ring of romance about it if you do but pronounce the "j," as the Spaniards do, softly.

Ojeda was a great favourite with the evil-minded Fonseca. His age at this time was about twenty, and he was a soldier.

Many a daring act had he performed at the siege of Granada, that helped his advancement in the army and at court. Though not of commanding stature he was exceedingly strong and well-proportioned, with piercing eyes and a handsome face, which was ever his passport among the fair sex.

Ojeda seemed born to command soldiers, and was, moreover, a splendid swordsman, a bold rider, and a man who appeared to love fighting for the very danger as well as the glory thereof.

As an example of his fearlessness, combined with his recklessness, Las Casas relates a strange story of him. It was in 1491, and the Queen happened to be in the grand tower of the cathedral at Seville, the streets below being lined with people. Ojeda was ever on the alert to perform any daring feat that might crown him with a momentary glory, and on this occasion a very foolhardy one presented itself to him. A beam of wood projected from the tower for a distance of about twenty feet, so high above the ground that the people are said to have looked like dwarfs. To amuse and astonish her majesty, not only did Ojeda walk nimbly out to the end of it, but stood there for a time on one leg, then calmly and smilingly returned, pausing when near the wall to look up and shy an orange to the very summit of the tower.

. . . . . .

I suppose no story in any way, even the most remote, connected with the life of Columbus would be complete without the "anecdote of the egg." So I must give it, though I do not think there was much in it after all—in the story, I mean; for I daresay the egg was pretty sound. The anecdote was related by Benzoni some fifty years after the death of our hero. It appears that shortly after his reception at court Columbus was at a party where a great many

other nobles were, and naturally enough the conversation turned to the wonderful discoveries in the New World or Indies. Now the Admiral was not a man to boast, but when asked questions he was very free with his information; and after listening to all he said that particular evening a young spark made the following impertinent remark: "Oh, Signor Cristoforo, if you had not discovered the Indies we should not have been wanting in someone in our country of Spain, who would soon have done just the same thing that you have done."

Columbus did not reply in words just then, but he called for an egg to be brought him. Then placing it on the table, he looked around him, saying:

"Gentlemen, I am willing to wager that no person in this room can cause this egg to stand on one end, as I can, naked, and without anything to support it."

Everyone tried, but no one succeeded. Then Columbus himself took the egg, and after beating it a little on the table, the end was of course slightly crushed, and—it stood easily enough. Everybody felt the rebuff, but no one spoke. They looked at each other and felt foolish.

I suppose it was a boiled egg. If it had been a raw egg and fresh, shaking it would have broken the yolk, and the trick could have been performed without chipping it. If on the other hand it had not been fresh, if it had been what is called an election egg, then shaking it might have brought about a *dénouement* that is frightful to contemplate, and that would not only have tarnished the uniform of Columbus but his fair fame as well. However, the lesson meant to be conveyed was, that we all think things very easy to do, after we have been shown how to do them.

. . . . . .

Christopher Columbus was by no means fond of city life and gaiety, and to be lionized as he now was by everybody

soon tired him. He was very glad, therefore, when he was permitted to take leave of his King and Queen, and go to Seville, and later on to Cadiz.

For a time he would be a very busy man indeed, for a new and far greater expedition was soon to sail to the New World, and the getting of this ready was almost a Herculean labour.

Had the Admiral been allowed to do everything himself, and to superintend everything, matters would have gone easy enough with all concerned, but in an evil hour the King and Queen placed Juan de Fonseca at the head of the equipment department, and from that very moment the trials and miseries of brave but simple Columbus commenced.

This fellow, Fonseca, was extremely jealous of the honour and glory that had been heaped upon the poor weaver's son, as he was fond of calling the Admiral. He himself was of noble blood, and did not hesitate to declare his detestation of upstarts or parvenus.

"Low blood will rise to the surface," he would say, "and this adventurer Colombo, this ragged Genoese, that has been pitched into power, will yet show himself in his true colours. Mark my words for it."

Holding such views as these, and hating Columbus as he did, Fonseca would naturally do all he could to spoil or hinder the expedition and thwart the hero in his wishes and desires. He seemed, indeed, playing for but one stake, the destruction of Columbus, and determined not to rest satisfied till he had hurled him from his high estate.

I wish the reader to bear in mind that to this vile wretch Fonseca, this cunning, clever, plotting fiend, and to the cut-throat adventurers and minions he placed in power, nearly all the misery that befell the islanders of the New World seems easily attributable.

There was one other cause, however, which must not be

forgotten. The success of Columbus and his wonderful discoveries had caused a perfect *furore* in Spain—and in Portugal too, for that matter. It was a *furore* of greed and lust. Here was a chance, adventurers thought, of gaining glory and wealth by merely crossing the sea. And so they flocked to Cadiz and besieged poor Columbus, and begged him to take them to the land of glory and gold.

Ah, me! I fear that the good Admiral's report of the splendour and riches of the new lands he had discovered, was almost too graphic, and in this way it did positive harm.

For when his fleet of seventeen ships sailed away from Cadiz on the twenty-fourth of September, fourteen hundred and ninety-three, not only had over a thousand of these ne'er-do-weel adventurers embarked publicly, but there were over a hundred stowaways!

Would it not be precisely the same in our own day? How few young men, for example, who have just left college or school, would be willing to go out to a country like Australia, or the western states of South America, and rough it like Crusoes, working themselves gradually up to wealth and a position by the only royal road thereto, namely honest labour?

But on the other hand, tell them of some far-off land of light and loveliness and liberty, where the woodlands are groves, where the wild-flowers hang from every tree among luscious tempting fruit, where the birds that fill the forests with song and with chatter are arrayed in all the bright tints of the rainbow; where the sun ever shines, and blue seas break lazily on coral shores; and where great rivers roll down their sands of gold. Tell youth of a country like this, and see it flock to the shipper's yard. Clerks throw down their dusty ledgers, they will no longer toil and moil 'twixt four cobwebby walls; shopkeepers leap madly over their counters, they shall not again have to smirk

and smile to please customers, whose heads they would like to punch; the butcher's boy throws down his cleaver; the barber's apprentice pitches away his razor; the tailor springs from his board; the "soutar" from his leathern stool; the carpenter leaves his bench; the valet gives his master warning. Oh, yes, they are all going. And they are all going to get rich at one mighty bound, and return some years afterwards and drive their tandems, and sport their gold rings, and tell their wild adventures in the best society that this fusty, old, worn-out England can boast of.

Well, some—say two per cent—of such lads may do good in the new land. The others will—disappear. And with them will disappear not only ninety-eight per cent but one hundred per cent of that worst class of all who seek to do well in new or foreign lands—the worn-out *roué*, the penniless debauchee, and the fellows whose friends, seeing that they could do no good in this country, started them off with a few pounds in their pockets—forlorn hopes—to the Antipodes or elsewhere.

Well, with such a scoundrel as Fonseca at the head of the equipment and manning department, Columbus could not help taking such apologies for colonizers as those I have mentioned.

There were two or three men placed in high positions that went out with our hero whose names I specially wish you to remember.

Friar Boil, the first priest who went to the New World, and turned out—well, you shall know soon enough. Margarit—you shall hear of him too. Ojeda—do not forget him, please. He was a hero of romance, but I should be loath to believe he did not possess a very considerable number of good points in his character. There was also Dr. Diego Chanca, chief physician and botanist.

It must be understood that this great fleet of three ships

and fourteen caravels was not sailing away for the mere sake of discovery, but to found a new colony.

. . . . . .

It is pleasing to turn for a moment or two from the hubbub and din of outfitting, from the bustle and stir of the seaport, and the red-tape drudgery of the office, to have just one little glimpse of Columbus in his private life.

His wife and his boys were almost constantly with him. To the former, indeed, Columbus owed almost everything. Was it not she who hung upon his words, and loved him, and looked upon him as a hero long before their marriage? Did she not, with a true woman's foresight, prophesy that he would yet be the greatest man in Spain? Did she not encourage him many and many a time when he felt that all his hopes were bound to be blighted, and that his life's sun was setting in darkness and despair? Ah! indeed, she did, and he never forgot her, and loved her now as dearly as ever. And not now only, for when far away at sea her presence was ever near him, and he could hear her gentle voice and loving words of sympathy high above the howling of the storm wind or dash of angry seas.

Yes, Columbus at home was very happy, quietly even merrily so. He felt and knew that he was loved and appreciated.

But Columbus had another home. We must not forget that, for he did not. And far away on Ligurian shores, there was the little cottage by the sea to which his thoughts right oft would turn. Oviedo tells us of his love for that father, and how he sent him money to make him comfortable in his old age.

Nobody, however, shall ever be able to convince me that he did not steal away from honour and glory, and red-tape, and work and worry, for a whole week to visit that village, that cottage, that dear white-haired father.

Or that he did not stay for two whole days at Genoa, and go out boating with Giacomo, his brother-in-law, and with the old fisherman, and bend his head and pray as the orange glow of sunset stole over the west and the evening bells came chiming o'er the waves.

And I won't have it either that he did not find out Alard's lass, the dark-eyed saucy Nita, and tell her where her lover was, and give her kind words and hope and a promise to bring her gallant hero safely home at last. Of course he did, and Nita gave him many a loving message, too, to bear over the sea to her truant lover, besides a lock of her bonnie hair, and—well, perhaps a kiss.

Oh, I can assure you, I shall not have history stripped of its romance on any account. I like to see the cocoa-nut, in its bonnie green husk, I love to see the moon with a rainbow halo round it. History without romance is to me as rusty as old chain-armour, as dusty as lawyer's parchment, as insufficient and unsatisfactory as roses made of paper. Give me the rose as it blooms in the garden, with the tears in its petals that morning shed, diffusing its fragrance all around till every heart grows glad, and every eye brightens that beholds it.

. . . . . .

"Heave—O—O!"

Why, the fleet is getting its anchor up, the flag-ship, the *Marigalante*, with the orange and crimson ensign of proud Spain drooping half over her stern, has her signal up.

All sail to the south and the west!

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

IDYLLIC LIFE AT THE FORT.

WHILE Columbus with his brave fleet is slowly sailing over the sea *en route* for the shores of Guacanagiri, let me hark back some months and tell the sad story of the fortress of Navidad.

. . . . . .

When they saw the *Niña* sail slowly away from the shores of Española, and finally round the distant headland and disappear, a strange feeling of lonesomeness took possession of the hearts of those left behind, which it took many days entirely to dispel.

Diego de Arana, however, well knowing that idleness is the greatest enemy to men in their situation, divided his little force into two companies, placing one each in command of Pedro Gutierrez and Roderigo de Escobedo.

Before doing so he called the whole of his people together, and in a very forcible speech endeavoured to impress upon them the intrinsic necessity of obeying all the instructions their great and wise Admiral had left with them before departing for Europe. He reminded them of all that Columbus had said, of his farewell words, his entreaties, his tears, and his prayers, and finished by inculcating on them the duties of discipline and strict obedience to orders.

He then explained to them the kind of duty and work he required of each. They were a little army, he said; and though all was peaceful enough at present, enemies had descended upon this coast before now from the mountain lands of Cibao, as well as from the far-off cannibal isles of the Caribs. They had descended before, and they might do so again. The fame of Columbus had spread far and wide through the islands that lay everywhere in these sunny seas; and not his fame alone, but his generosity and his willingness to give to whomsoever asked them gifts of beads and of bells, that were looked upon as *turey* or treasures from the heavens high, and capable of bringing good fortune to the wearer either in love or in war, and of averting evil and disease as well. There could be no doubt that as soon as the natives of several outlying districts of Española heard that the Admiral had left half his people here, many would flock to the coast either to beg or to barter.

They would come in peace at first, and would doubtless remain at peace with the little colony, so long as they saw that the members were brave brothers, and could defend themselves to the death in defence of their rights.

But all the natives of Española were not so averse to warfare as was Guacanagiri and his good people. When, therefore, some of these warlike tribes should find they could not obtain what they wanted by fair means, the probability was that they would try to get them by foul.

They were not afraid, however; indeed they need not be. They had everything left them to enable them to live a happy and a peaceful life. But they must deal straightforwardly and honestly in their treatment of the natives. Nor must they abuse their kindness.

They must keep up their drill too. Those among them who were not soldiers must now learn to be. If they did their work day after day, if they were regular in the per-

formance of their duties, if they did not absent themselves without leave from the fort, nor neglect their gardens, they might be very happy indeed, and the time would pass wonderfully quickly. So that when Columbus returned next year with his gay and his gallant fleet from Spain, as he was sure to do, and should find his little colony thriving, then no doubt he would promote most of them to positions of the highest trust, and by and by the colony of Española would be rich and happy beyond compare.

Arana said much more which it is needless to transcribe. He set about, early even on the second day, allotting his hours of duty in the garrison, work in the gardens, and pleasure to each man. To a great extent the discipline was much the same as that carried on on board ship.

Very early—before the stars had quite faded in the west, or the sun glared yellow or red over the eastern headland—the busy little garrison was all alive and all astir. Many went to bathe in the river or sea, but by seven o'clock the men sat down to breakfast, and before eight everything was washed and tidied up, and the crew had an hour to loiter about the ground that was to be made into gardens, or to laugh and chaff with the kindly-hearted natives, who crowded round even at this early time in the morning.

It was at eight o'clock that Arana and his officers sat down to breakfast. At nine the whole garrison mustered, and the forenoon was spent in drill and work.

There was still a good deal to be done inside the fortress itself in order to make it perfectly habitable and comfortable, and nothing was neglected by Arana and his officers that could add in the least degree to the welfare of the men. Seeing those in authority so willing and energetic, everyone tried to do his best to assist. For until the fortification was complete in itself they could not think of doing anything else beyond the walls thereof.

The ditch and the drawbridge gave them some considerable trouble for the first few days, but in a week's time that was completed to the entire satisfaction of Arana.

After the mid-day meal a whole hour's rest was taken, then there was more drill and more work, and after this the men were dismissed to do as they pleased until the vespers or evening prayer.

But nobody was allowed to absent himself during any portion of the evening or night, without the special consent of one of the chief officers.

By nine o'clock, with the exception of the sentries that were set at sundown, and relieved by others every four hours, all the men were supposed to be in their hammocks.

The planning and laying out of the garden grounds around Fort Navidad naturally engaged a good deal of the time of both officers and men. But this was very enjoyable and healthful employment.

The natives brought them all the wood they desired from out the forest, and with this they built a strong paling or rather palisade right round all the garden. This was intended really to act as their first line of defence, in case their stronghold should be attacked by an enemy too numerous to rout in the open. Guacanagiri himself took much pleasure in seeing this work proceed, and also in superintending his people as they lent a hand to assist the Spaniards; and so the building of the palisade went on right merrily.

The Admiral had left seeds with his people, and after the garden walks were laid out, covered with gravel from the sea-shore and prettily bordered with stones, the soil was turned over and the seeds were planted or sown. They were principally those of vegetables. But it must not be supposed that the gardens were to possess no flowers. No, for these were specially provided for, and before two months had passed away, flowers of the rarest shapes and hues

bloomed and grew everywhere along the borders. They even draped the palisades and carpeted the banks of the ditch with a glory of colour that it was delightful to behold, while the richness of their perfume filled the whole air by night even more than by day.

Of pastimes and pleasures the little colony had many. The boat belonging to the *Santa Maria* had been left, and in this, almost every night when it was not blowing, which it seldom was, some of the men put out to sea for a little way, and never did they return without fish of some kind. As a rule two of the bravest and most expert of the natives would go with them; and although their fishing gear was of the most simple description imaginable, it was exceedingly effective.

Turtles were also caught sometimes, and formed a delicious change. On shore the principal things caught by traps or killed by bow and arrow were a species of rabbit and various sorts of birds. So that, what with rabbits, birds, fish, turtle, cassava-root, sweet-potatoes, and various kinds of legumes, the larder was well supplied.

In addition to these, however, biscuits enough to last the garrison for a whole year had been left, and a goodly store of wine besides.

Arana, perfectly sure that the natives were good and true selected about one hundred of the youngest and strongest and had them drilled after the fashion of European soldiers.

This greatly delighted the faithful Cacique Guacanagiri, who was as pleased as a boy to be drilled at the head of his dusky warriors. Some further portions of the wreck of the *Santa Maria*, with iron attached, were found and fished up by the natives, and the metal was fashioned into spear-points, which were far more formidable than the fish-bone affairs with which these black fellows had been armed before the arrival of Columbus.

But a portion of the white men's drill consisted every day in archery. Both Alard and Galway Will were experts with the bow and arrow, and so too were several others. They found that from a species of pine-tree which grew in the woods excellent bows could be made, and it was not difficult at all to make arrows. It was very important, Arana thought, to have a body of well-trained archers, for in case of invasion these would be invaluable should their store of gunpowder run short.

But the pastimes of the officers and garrison did not end here. In weather when fishing at sea was impracticable, there was the beautiful river and its numerous burns or tributaries, many parts of which were teeming with fish of different sorts that seemed wanton to be caught. How they leapt and gambolled about, to be sure, either singly or in shoals! If in shoals, a rush would be made for the bait almost before it had time to sink, and the fish that was successful in getting it was the envy of all his fellows. They did not trouble themselves to wonder why, as soon as he had swallowed it, he was suddenly transferred to realms above, and no sooner was more bait cast than there was a renewed struggle to seize it. No man, therefore, ever went up stream without coming back with a handsome string of the finny denizens of the pools.

Alard and Will were far more fond of river than of sea fishing, and frequently went all alone together far away up into the glens and the warm and dreamy woods. Sometimes they took a native with them, sometimes old Gilbert, and now and then young Juan Doloroso, he of the red eyes—though they never were at all red now.

But Alard and Will liked best to be by themselves, for then they could talk of their homes and of Nita and Bridget. Although serving as an ordinary soldier when Will and he first met, Alard was the son of an officer in the Spanish

army, an English soldier of fortune who had come out from a seaport of Britain, fallen in love, married, and settled down.

So Alard used to tell Will about his father and mother, as well as his Nita—oh, no, not his Nita! had she not turned up her fan at him, and laughed at him, and all sorts of things?—yet for all that he was of opinion that she did think of him at times.

He told Will that he believed the Admiral would be as good as his word and see Nita, and tell her how her poor soldier was languishing in a foreign land, and so on and so forth.

Will laughed. "A deal of languishing there is about it," he cried. "Oh, my friend, if Nita only saw you sitting at dinner, she would know how to value the languishing part of the love-making."

Then Will launched out in praise of his mother, and his Bridget, and his sister, and the sow. And in his turn Alard laughed until the very woods rang again and the parrots rose in flocks of living green.

After darkness had fallen and the sentries were set, the men in their huge mess-place or refectory crowded round the tables, over which big lamps hung, and read to each other from the few books that Columbus had not forgotten to leave them, or they talked about home and other parts of the world which they had visited; or the best story-tellers —and these were Galway Will and Gabriel—were called upon to spin the others yarns. The story-tellers always had *carte blanche* to draw upon their imaginations as much as they pleased, and the more weird and wonderful they made their tales the better were their comrades pleased.

It was great fun for the men to pit Gabriel and Will against each other of an evening. Lots were drawn as to who should commence, then the interest began, and at the conclusion of the evening whoever was declared winner was

excused from certain cooking and sanitary duties for the whole of the next day.

Guacanagiri himself frequently dined at the officers' mess, and although he could never be prevailed upon to drink wine, Arana and his companions found him a very engaging fellow. They had given him presents of cloth, and his own tailors had made him robes of state, which he wore on high days and holidays; and very noble he looked in these, his head adorned with feathers, and hawk-bells dangling from the great spear, with which he helped himself along as if it had been an alpenstock.

Then not only the officers but many of the men were often invited to the cacique's residence, and regaled on all the best the island could afford. One evening at a village feast Guacanagiri excelled his ordinary self.

He produced a gourd of wine!

He felt sure that he had astonished his guests for one night, and that their delight would quite equal their wonder. So he watched Arana narrowly as he raised a shellful of the ruby liquor to his lips.

Arana took one mouthful. Just one. Oh, no, he did not swallow it. The fact is his nose had preached caution, and he was on his guard, so he sprang from his seat after passing the wine-cup to Pedro, and got rid of the mouthful with more speed than ceremony.

Guacanagiri was not a success as a manufacturer of cunning wines. Probably this particular brand and blend was a little too cunning. He had decanted the blood of a turtle into a shell and mixed it with the juice of fruit. Wholesome enough no doubt, but not over-palatable.

Well, Guacanagiri was an honest fellow, and quite as innocent as he was honest, both he and his people. Nor did he forget that he had promised to collect gold for the officers of the garrison to be stored until the Admiral

should return. This was brought to the fort in the form of sand or dust and also in small nuggets. It came from the far interior of Cibao, where lived the fighting Indians, with whom, however, the people of Guacanagiri were at present at peace.

When Arana offered to pay the cacique for the gold, he held up his hands laughing, and gave the governor to understand that he would take nothing for it. It was all for the Admiral, and he was *turey turey.*

Arana constructed a kind of strong-room in his own apartment, and here not only was all the gold stored, but all the curious and strange specimens, botanical and otherwise, that were collected by officers and men, if they were deemed worthy of preservation.

Just as Arana had predicted, very many natives from distant parts of the country visited the fort, and brought gold, or gold ornaments and arms, to barter for bells.

Some of these men were fierce even to a degree. They treated Guacanagiri's people as if they were slaves or dogs, and sometimes even struck them. One day while Alard and Will were returning from a fishing expedition they heard a wild and pitiful scream of pain and alarm, and rushing into a glade close by, from which the sounds had come, they found that three sturdy savages had knocked down a Guacanagiri native and were beating him unmercifully with their bows, while one had drawn a knife.

Will was first on the field of battle. He knocked down one fellow with his fist and another with his fishing-rod, while Alard gave such a truly British account of the third, that in five minutes' time the savages were all calling aloud for mercy. But they were tied together hands to hands, and thus marched off to the garrison. Arana, however, considering that they had been punished enough, permitted them to go scot-free. They never returned.

Sometimes a band of savage-looking natives would come in canoes, but when asked if these were Caribs or Cannibals, Guacanagiri's men always shook their heads negatively.

Arana, whenever an extra numerous gang of hostile-looking or armed savages appeared, took care to treat them with the greatest kindness, but at the same time he never neglected to show them some display of the strength and death-dealing skill of his little garrison.

These were occasions when the expenditure of a little gunpowder was urgently called for, so, after a review of his archers and spearmen, and a little tournament between those of his men most skilled in sword exercise, he used to place targets at a distance from the forts, man the guns, and blow the targets to pieces with shrapnel.

The terror of even the most savage of these children of the wilds, on hearing the thunder of the lombards, seeing the flash and the clouds of smoke, and witnessing the devastation of the targets was extreme.

They threw themselves on their faces and tried to bury their heads in the ground. It was too much *turey*, far too much *turey*, they seemed to think.

. . . . . .

For many months after the Admiral sailed away in the little *Niña* Arana and his men continued to lead a happy, peaceful, and idyllic life.

As spring returned, and the wild and terrible storms that had frequently raged through the forests in the winter-time were all but events of the past, Nature assumed her sweetest and loveliest garb.

Ah! spring was spring indeed on the shores of this beautiful island and in its dreamy woods. I say dreamy, because there was something in the very atmosphere that hung around the flower-clad hills and forests, or breathed

across the sleepy sea, that seemed to lull the senses into a kind of happy oblivion.

Somewhere here,

> "In lowly dale, fast by a river's side,
> With woody hill o'er hill encompass'd round,"

the Castle of Indolence might have stood.

It was in reality what the poet calls "a listless climate,"

> "Where, sooth to say,
> No living wight could work, nor carëd even for play.
> . . . . . .
> Was nought around but images of rest:
> Sleep-soothing groves, and quiet lawns between;
> And flowery beds that slumbrous influence kest
> From poppies breath'd; and beds of pleasant green,
> Where never yet was creeping creature seen."

For many months, I say, the Spaniards lived happily enough, because they continued to do their duty. Then they began to tire and to yawn. Was it the influence of the climate, I wonder? I am willing to believe so. But these men, with few exceptions, were not the very best and most virtuous to begin with, and passion is like a snake whose fangs are ten times more deadly just after awaking from rest and sleep.

Arana began to find out at last that discipline was getting more lax, and that breaches thereof were neither punished by his officers nor reported to him. Then came the beginning of the terrible end.

CHAPTER II.

MASSACRE.

RETURNING one evening from a visit to Guarico, the cacique's residence, Arana met a party of mountain men coming rejoicing from the fortress; they had bells and beads and other trinkets and were in high glee.

Questioned by the interpreter they informed Arana that they had been to the white man's big fort with plenty of gold, and that they had been there often before.

This was strange!

Arana had never seen them. He had seen none of their gold. It had not been stored for king and country.

Arana was very quiet that night at table. He scarcely spoke, he hardly smiled. There were clouds on his brow, the clouds that heralded a coming storm.

That storm broke next day, when he found out that, on their own account entirely, both Pedro and Rodrigo were collecting stores of gold. They laughed in Arana's face when told by him that they had been guilty of a serious breach of discipline, not to call it by a stronger term, in giving away bells and beads for gold not intended for the general store.

"But," they replied, "what are bells and beads?"

Then Arana's anger rose.

"Bells and beads mean gold in this country," he replied, "and you have robbed Columbus, and robbed the King and Queen of Spain."

Then he ordered them to deliver up all their gold.

They did so after high words had passed. The high words took the form of threats.

"After all," they told Arana, "you were only appointed by the Admiral because you are a kind of half-cousin of his, while we were appointed by King Ferdinand himself, and moreover we are to succeed you when you die."

The governor's blood began to boil and he placed his hand upon his sword.

"Restore the gold," he cried.

The gold was accordingly placed in the strong-room, and with it every bead and bell in the fortress.

But peace was never restored.

Hardly a day after this passed without a scene. Men absented themselves from prayers, and from drill even. They ceased to work with the same will in their beautiful gardens, and wild weeds sprang up apace, speedily destroying the growing crops of vegetables by usurping the ground.

When these men were punished by Arana, Pedro and Rodrigo shrugged their shoulders and muttered, "Tyrant!"

Things grew worse and worse, and that too very rapidly. One day Guacanagiri himself sought private audience of Arana, and with tears rolling down his cheeks, told him of the base ingratitude of the men for all the favours done them, how they robbed his people on every side, and how they even rendered themselves a fear and a terror by their brutal and wanton licentiousness. Then the governor determined to show his power, and to make an example of one of his men that should be remembered ever after.

Next morning, therefore, every man in the fort was summoned to special parade, and, with Arana by his side, a native who had been grossly used walked along the front. The native pointed out the man who had done the deed, and he was immediately arrested after confessing his guilt.

Arana drew his men more into a circle now and spoke to

them long and earnestly, beseeching them, praying them to refrain from such acts of cruelty and violence as Giacomo had been found guilty of, and to return to a more strict adherence to duty and to loyalty. There was only one sad ending, he told them, to such conduct as theirs had been, for dissension must lead to the entire breaking up and ruin of the colony. But, he added, he was determined to maintain the discipline of the fortress and community at all hazards, and Giacomo would be made an example of, which he prayed Heaven would have due effect on the others. Giacomo must die.

Then he dismissed all hands to duty.

No leave was granted that day to anyone, and the sentry at the outer gate had orders to shoot down any man who attempted to leave the garden grounds by force.

Early next morning Giacomo was to be hanged, and the preparations were made that very afternoon, the condemned man, bound with ropes of grass, being imprisoned in a wooden shed not far from the scaffold.

It was nearly the end of the middle watch next night, and darkness and silence were over land and sea. The condemned man had fallen into an uneasy dream-perturbed sleep in which he often started and shuddered; even the sentry, feeling certain that everything was safe, had allowed slumber to steal his senses away, and nodded as he leant against the palisade. But even had he been awake, so intense was the darkness to-night, that hardly could he have seen that black figure climbing the barricade and making its way towards the condemned man's shed.

Another minute and Giacomo started. A hand had touched his shoulder. Surely then his hour had come.

"Hist!" said a voice in broken Spanish. "I have come to save you. I am Guacanagiri."

Next moment his cords were cut, and he was free. He

went gliding silently out and away after the cacique, and neither spoke until they were far away in the woods.

"I leave you now," Guacanagiri said. "Keep to the river. It will lead you far into the mountain lands of Cibao."

The man fell on his knees impulsively.

"How can I thank you?" he cried. "Oh, how can I show my gratitude?"

"By never returning," was all the reply. And immediately after Giacomo found himself alone.

Though, when daylight came, the sentry was punished for permitting the prisoner to escape, in his heart Arana was not sorry, for he was really a humane man. But no one ever knew who had set Giacomo free.

Things went on more quietly that day, and the governor fain hoped that the storm which had threatened the peace of the little colony had quite blown over. Alas! it was but the silence that precedes the hurricane, for that very afternoon, while on parade, Arana received a short and surly answer from Pedro.

"This," he cried, "before my men!"

Both drew their swords, but in less than ten seconds Arana had disarmed his antagonist, and would have slain him where he stood had not Rodrigo rushed to his side and beaten up the governor's sword. This was but the signal for a wild *mêlée*, in which all hands took part.

Guacanagiri, the innocent chief, who had come with a few natives to pay a friendly visit to the fort, stood helpless and aghast to see the fearful struggle. He was horrified, too. Surely, he thought, I have been mistaken. These white men, whom I believed came from the Good Spirit, and were *turey turey*, have been sent by the Evil One.

Then he placed his fingers in his ears and fled.

But that same evening ten men, including Pedro and

Rodrigo, passed through the cacique's village. They had left the fort for ever, and were on their way to the mountains. Guacanagiri wept to part with them. He could see now that the end of the little colony was not far distant. However, he gave these mutineers much good advice, telling them especially to avoid the country of Caonabo, a fierce chief who dwelt among the hills, and was of Carib origin, and in his time had been guilty of some fearful massacres on the islands. Then he loaded them with food, and sent guides with them to show them the way into the land of gold.

The warlike chief Caonabo whom the cacique mentioned was at this time the terror of the island. He had noted the arrival of the white men with anger and with jealousy, but knowing the strength of the fortress he had forborne from attacking it. He preferred to bide his time. He had spies, nevertheless, and one of these had hurried off as soon as he noticed the direction that the mutineers were taking, and arrived at the chief's rude palace long before the white men.

"The Good Spirit," he cried, "has delivered the white faces into the hands of the king. Behold! one half will soon be here, the other may then easily be defeated."

Caonabo met the mutineers with shouts of joy, the rattling of spears, and much beating of war-drums. He led them to his own village, and entertained them at his own house, placing meat and drink before them, and making them presents of gold-dust and nuggets.

Suspicion was entirely lulled, if ever it existed.

But about midnight, when the mutineers were wrapped in slumber, a dark figure glided into the bungalow, and one by one stole all the swords and spears.

This bungalow stood in open ground some little distance from the chief's village, and from midnight till the dawn of

day glimmered in the east, busy hands were engaged quietly piling faggots of brushwood all around it.

Fire was now procured from the village, and the awful heap was finally lighted all the way round.

The poor wretches were awakened at length by the smoke and the crackling of the flames, and as soon as the first of them attempted to rush out through the blazing faggots the joy-yells of the savages rent the air. That shout was the last thing on earth the mutineers heard, for every man was either speared or smothered. The bungalow in which they had slept became their funeral pile.

These wild and warlike natives had for the first time in their lives seen white men die, and now they clamoured for further sacrifice, for more blood. Caonabo had not been on the war-path for some months, and he was not sorry now to have an opportunity of leading his heroes against the white man's fort, and against his old enemy Guacanagiri.

So he chose two hundred of the best and bravest of his men and armed them to the teeth. The very swords and spears that the dead mutineers had wielded against their fellows would once more be used against them in the hands of these savages.

This little army was led away by Caonabo from the bleak mountain fastnesses by night. The way was long, but as soon as they had left the land of gold they plunged into the darkness of the forest. They marched till morning, then slept all day, resuming the journey as soon as star-shine came once more.

They had still some fifteen miles to march, but there was little fear of their being seen, for that terrible night a storm was raging over sea and land, roaring loud in the woods, and tearing great limbs from the trees. Many of Caonabo's men were wounded by falling branches and left in the forest. Their companions marched onwards. Nothing could stay

them from the horrible massacre they were going to carry out.

That very storm was the means of saving the lives of four of the white men. These were Alard, Will, Gabriel, and Juan Doloroso. They were nearly always together, and that day they had gone on a fishing expedition, and been blown far out to sea. At eventide they had landed on a small uninhabited island, on the beach of which they drew up the boat and proceeded to make themselves comfortable for the night.

All in the fort were sound asleep, with the exception of the sentry, who walked slowly up and down near the garden gate. A young moon was slowly setting over the western sea, but gave only an uncertain light.

Something dark comes creeping now along the ground outside the palisade. The figure might have been seen, had the sentry been looking in that direction, hanging for just a moment on the fence.

As stealthily as a cat it drops inside and once more crawls along the ground, nearer and nearer to the sentry. It is Caonabo himself. Now he springs to his feet. There is a dull thud and a groan. Something falls, and all is silent once more.

But see, from the sides of the grass huts, where some of the men sleep, and where many things are stored, little tongues of fire leap up. They curl higher and higher, and soon every building is wrapped in flames and clouds of curling smoke.

Hark to that fearful yell!

Arana hears it. All in the fort hear it, leap up, and fly to their arms. No, they fly to the places where their arms should be. They are gone, and they themselves are at the mercy of the foe! For Caonabo had pursued the same tactics against those in the fortress, that had been so fearfully successful with the mutineers.

I pass over the awful details of the massacre. They are too terrible even to think of. Suffice it to say that not a man escaped, and that the fortress and all its surroundings were burned to the ground.

Guacanagiri had hurried to the scene of action as soon as possible, but neither he nor his men could withstand the fury of those fighting savages.

They were completely routed, many were killed. The town of Guarico was laid in ashes, and only the cacique, with some of his people, escaped with difficulty to the forest.

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It was late next evening when Alard and his friends reached the beach near to the fort. The night was clear and starry, and the young moon glimmered faintly over the mountain tops. It gave enough light for the men to notice a dark object that lay on the sand. It was one of the murdered men fearfully disfigured.

Hardly knowing what they did, Alard and Will now hurried on towards the fort. Not a sound fell on their ears, not a glimmer of light was seen!

Darkness and silence! Naught else!

They say that dead men tell no tales. Ah! but these scorched and mutilated bodies, dimly visible in the starshine, had each a fearful story to relate, that brought tears to the eyes of Alard and Will!

They hurried back to the boat to report the massacre.

Then a consultation was held. It would be unsafe to remain anywhere here, that was evident. The enemy would be sure to return.

"Let us put to sea again," said Alard, "and seek some eastern isle where we can live at peace, if possible, until the Admiral returns."

"Yes, that is best," said Will sadly. "To remain here is

certain death, and if we find an island-home in the east we are sure to see the ships of Columbus sailing westwards."

"Oh, they will come. I feel sure they will come, Alard," he continued.

"Yes, Will," said Alard, "but it is all very terrible. Nor do I understand it. It could not have been Guacanagiri and his people who did this deed?"

"Nay, nay; doubtless he too is dead, else we should see someone about. This has been the doing of the Carib chief Caonabo."

"And our own mutineers."

"No, even that I will not believe. They too, foolish men that they were, have been slain. Come, Juan, get into the boat, and thank your lucky stars you went fishing with us."

"But, Alard," said Will, "can we leave these poor bodies unburied?"

"Will, I am ashamed of myself. Come, Gabriel and Juan, let us do what we can to cover up the bodies, albeit it is at the risk of our lives."

It was ghastly work they had now to do on that silent and dreary shore. But by the time the moon had sank once more in the west the task was finished.

Then sail was hoisted, and away to the eastwards went the boat.

And now we must leave them for a time and get back to Columbus and his fleet.

CHAPTER III.

ST. ELMO'S FIRE—LOST IN THE JUNGLE—A FIGHT—THE NEW COLONY.

UPON the whole the second voyage of Columbus to the New World was a prosperous one, from the time of leaving the last of the Canary Islands to the day that land was sighted.

The *Marigalante*, however, was very far indeed from being a crack ship, and she is said to have been the slowest in the whole fleet. But she was also the largest, and therefore Columbus had chosen her as flag-ship.

The Admiral never forgot a promise, however apparently trifling. That made to his youngest brother, Diego, might have been given hurriedly, but he fulfilled it nevertheless, and thus we find that the young man—he was barely twenty-five—sailed with Columbus on this voyage, and afterwards held several important commands in the West Indies.

The reader will not forget that there was another Diego, the Admiral's elder son. But he had been appointed page to the Prince of Spain, and entered upon his duties before the fleet sailed.

Before he had been two weeks at sea, our hero had regained all his good health and strength, and was as happy and hopeful as any sailor could be.

They encountered one fearful storm, however, accompanied by thunder and lightning and great torrents of rain, which lasted for many hours.

It was by night, and while the storm was still raging, although the thunder and lightning had ceased, that the

men of the *Marigalante* were struck dumb with astonishment and fear, to see on the main-topmast head a strange pale weird light glimmering and burning. It was not unlike a huge taper, and it flickered at times as if going out, or left, going skywards some distance and once more alighting on the mast.

But Columbus calmed the fears of the crew by telling them that the strange light they saw was in reality a ghostly torch held in the hand of St. Elmo, and that it was a sign given them for their reassurance. Now no tempest could hurt them, no mountain seas destroy their bark. Then the men threw themselves on their faces to pray, after which they chanted litanies and orisons, and the strange light appeared no more on the mast.

In the mess aft, under the poop deck, were not only Columbus himself, but Dr. Chanca, Friar Boil, Margarit, the brave young Ojeda, and of course, young Diego. So that they were a very happy and cheerful party indeed. Ojeda in particular was the very life and soul of the mess, and though young Diego was most circumspect both in dress and demeanour, being more like a priest in many ways than even Friar Boil himself, he was never averse to pleasant conversation, and even to fun.

The first island sighted this voyage was a most lovely one.

"Land ahead!" was shouted very early in the dawn of the third of November, and when the sun uprose astern of the fleet, the beauty of the island, with its massive forests like a rolling cloudland of green, and its picturesque and serrated mountains with the waves breaking lazily into snow-white foam on the cliffs and sands beneath, formed a sight that dazzled the eyes of the mariners, and shout after shout of joy went heavenwards from every ship and caravel in the line.

The third of November fell on the Lord's day, so this island was called Dominica or the Isle of Our Lord. The Admiral could find no proper harbour, however, on its northern shore; but not far off was a smaller and very pretty island which he called Marigalante, after his ship, and in a roadstead here the fleet cast anchor.

This island was taken possession of in the usual solemn and impressive way. Columbus permitted many of his officers, passengers, and crew to land here, and for hours they wandered about dazed with the magnificence and beauty of everything they saw—flowers, fruit, and foliage, birds and butterflies and creeping things, all were as radiant as the rainbow.

In the afternoon they put to sea again, and were soon within some leagues of the large island of Guadeloupe, with its magnificent mountain peaks and its strangely impressive scenery. The mariners were astonished, and even awed, to see a great waterfall coming down from a mountain top, as if it had rushed out of the sky itself, and losing itself in the greenery of the woods beneath.

Unlike Marigalante, on which they had found no inhabitants, this island was inhabited. But, as usual, the savages fled, leaving their houses and even their children to the mercy of the Spaniards. These little naked creatures the men caught and made so much of, that they soon felt no fear of them.

Many a strange creature and thing did our hero find on this island as well as the little naked savages. Many a beautiful bird and bright-winged parrot, many a strange moth and beetle, with trees and flowers and fruit altogether new, even to the Admiral. The most delicious fruit found, however, was the pine-apple, which Ojeda said was surely good enough for the saints in heaven.

The fleet stayed here for several days, and not without

adventure. While wandering in a deserted village on the evening of the sixth of November, his brother being with him, Columbus came in sight of a strange relic in a grove of trees. It was the prow of a ship or caravel, and had been set up on end as if for the purpose of worship.

"How has it come to this island?" mused the Admiral.

"This is indeed strange," said Diego. "Is it part of the *Santa Maria*, think you, brother?"

"No, no, I should know that."

"Mayhap the thing has floated here from far away."

"Yes, Diego; but mayhap it came as part and parcel of a good caravel, blown hither and loaded with starving people, and if so, what has been their fate?"

"Oh, brother, look, look!"

As he spoke, he pointed to a place where a great fire had burned, and in this fire and around it were portions of human remains, that had evidently been cooked with the view of devouring. They were on a cannibal island, then.

Diego shook his head. "That," he said, "would have been the fate of any poor wretches who might have been in the caravel."

In a hut surrounded by high palisades, and evidently a kind of prison-house, they found no less than six women and two little boys bound with ropes of grass. It was evident they had been brought by the cannibals from other islands for the purpose of killing and eating.

They were taken on board ship.

On returning to the *Marigalante* that evening, an officer from another ship had come to report that one of the captains of a caravel, having gone on an exploring expedition with eight men, had not returned.

As they did not come back next morning, great uneasiness was felt concerning them, it being deemed very likely that they had fallen into the hands of the savages.

Guns were fired and trumpets blown, but all in vain. Then an expedition was made into the interior. Forty well-armed men, under the command of the bold Ojeda, who had volunteered to lead them, started off to scour the island. But even they returned without finding any trace of the wanderers, and then all hope was given up.

Just, however, as Columbus was thinking he must leave the island, behold Diego Marque and his eight men staggered forth from the woods and came towards the beach. They had been lost in the great forest and dense jungle, and had wandered for days without any food except fruit.

No men were found, strange to say, on this island, and it was evident enough that they had gone head-hunting in their canoes.

Sailing onwards still to the west, many other little islands were found, indeed so numerous were they that they could not all be named except in groups.

On one of these, having landed to seize some of the natives for the purpose of studying their language, a party of Columbus's men were attacked by the savages, and barely succeeded in putting them to the rout.

Our hero knew now what he had suspected before, namely, that he had come to the cannibal islands of the far-famed Caribs, an exceedingly fierce and implacable race that inhabited these sunny isles. But to make war was no part of Columbus's plans, so, although many of his men were wounded, he withdrew without even thinking of taking revenge. These savages used bows and poisoned arrows, which caused at least one of the wounded men to afterwards die in great agony.

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After spending many days examining these strange islands, all sail was made for the northern shores of Española, for

not only Columbus himself, but every one on board was anxious now to reach the colony of Navidad.

Alas! little did they think of the horrors that had there taken place since the *Niña* had sailed away.

Never, perhaps, had Columbus felt a day drag more wearily on than did that twenty-seventh of November, on which he had sanguinely expected to cast anchor near to Guacanagiri's land long before the going down of the sun. But though the wind was favourable, it was but very light, and twilight was fading into darkness before they had rounded the headland of Monte Christi. It was indeed a lovely night, however, with a sky so weird in its beauty that few artists would dare to place it on canvas. All along the west and high up towards the zenith was a huge wedge of cloud, tapering below to its thin edge half-way down, and shading from threatening blue-gray to faintest pink. Along the lower part of the wedge, and on the tint, were dashed streaks of the brightest vermilion. Beneath, the sky was clear and of a strangely bright sea-blue, till it neared the horizon, where it once more shaded into pink. All the water between every rolling wave-top, was dashed with pinks, and blue, and lakes, and against the skies was darkly silhouetted the rocky headland.

But by the time the vessels had rounded this cape, and were standing in towards Navidad on the light evening breeze, the colours had quite faded from sea and sky, and all in the east bright stars were glimmering.

Columbus was on the poop, gazing anxiously shorewards.

But never a light was seen! And never a sound was heard; no cry; no welcoming cheer.

A lombard was fired. Then another. Their thunders rolled shoreward and were reverberated from the distant hills. Then silence settled down once more on shore and

"Ah, Diego," said the Admiral, "that is the silence of death!"

He placed his hand across his face. Diego said never a word. His brother was praying.

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A night of sad anxiety passed slowly by. Every one on board the *Marigalante* was hoping against hope.

But all doubts were ended when day broke, and a native boat came off with some of Guacanagiri's relatives in it, to tell the sad tale of the dissension among the colonists, the desertion of Pedro and Rodrigo, and the subsequent massacre at the fort.

And Guacanagiri had himself been wounded, and was still confined to his hammock, but residing now at another part of the island.

Columbus landed with an armed boat's crew, and walked sadly over all the place. Even the palisades were charred and burned, the fort was a ruin, rank weeds grew where the gardens had been, and snakes wriggled over the graves that Alard and the others had made. There was the gloom of desolation about the ruin; and the very blood of the murdered men seemed to call aloud for vengeance.

Columbus came mournfully away at last and returned to the ship.

He determined to found his new colony on a different part of the island. The associations here were far too sad.

So the ships sailed back more to the east, and once more rounded the headland in search of a good site. This was finally settled upon; a part of the shore near to two rivers being selected, a green and lovely stretch of fairly level ground, with hills behind, and rising woodlands and the mountains far in the rear.

Stores were landed at once, and very soon temporary huts were thrown up as shelters for the new colonists, until

the town of Isabella—that was the name chosen for it—should be built. Few of these men had known the unfortunate people of Navidad, and so they were very soon forgotten.

In a few days' time messengers arrived from Guacanagiri himself, by whom he entreated the Admiral to come and see him. This Columbus did, going in state, accompanied by several of his officers, among whom were a surgeon and Friar Boil.

Guacanagiri shed tears of mingled grief and sorrow on once more beholding the Admiral. He told his terrible story of fight and massacre in simple language, which seemed to bear the impress of truth on every word of it. He told it in broken Spanish, with now and then some words of his own language, which was even more effective.

There was silence for a moment after he had finished, and this was first broken by Friar Boil.

"I do not believe a word this man says," he cried. "Surgeon, he says he is wounded. Examine the leg."

The rough cotton bandages with which the limb was wrapped were undone; but the wound, if indeed it had been anything save a bruise, was healed, yet the cacique manifested great pain when it was touched.

Guacanagiri explained that it had been struck with a stone, and the surgeon himself admitted that there no doubt had been severe contusion, and that the bone was not yet quite healed.

But Friar Boil refused to believe Guacanagiri.

"That is the man who murdered our people," he cried angrily; "and, Admiral Columbus, you will be wanting in duty if you do not slay him and all his people now and at once."

Columbus only smiled.

"I know my duty, holy father," he said, "and will always

do it, God helping me. But this chief is guiltless of the deed of blood, and I will not wreak my vengeance on an innocent man, and one who has been so true a friend to me."

"Pah!" cried Boil scornfully.

"Friar Boil," said Columbus, "you may retire. I am sorry you were ever appointed. This is not the doctrine of Christ you would teach. I am ashamed of you. Retire ere my anger be raised against you."

"If I am suspected of having done ill to your people, O master," said Guacanagiri solemnly, "take me forth and slay me, and not me only, but all that call me chief."

"No, no, my good friend. I have known you longer than yonder priest. Say no more, but be content; for I have not doubted you, and never will."

Before the Admiral left he had further proof of the faithfulness of Guacanagiri.

"I have often thought of you when far away," said the chief, "and for you I have made a little collection of the bright yellow gold you love so well."

To his astonishment Columbus had then placed before him a large quantity, not only of gold dust, but of nuggets; and no doubt these had been gathered by the natives at great risk to life, for the gold regions lay far away in the mountainous regions of Cibao, where the fierce and warlike tribes lived who were governed by the Carib Caonabo.

For nearly three months the building of the town of Isabella was carried cheerfully on, and before the end of January, 1494 A.D., the houses were all inhabited by the new colonists, and service was daily held in the little chapel.

Hardly, however, had the Spaniards taken up their abode on shore ere sickness and fever began to appear. This might be accounted for in many ways. To begin with,

many of the settlers had not been in the best of health before they started, and the knocking about and the roughing it at sea had scarcely tended to their improvement. Then there was the hard work under a broiling sun, and the over-eating of fruits of various kinds, to say nothing, perhaps, of the malaria from the banks of the river.

There was one other reason: the food which the agents of the vile Fonseca had sent had been bad at the commencement, and soon began to get worse, till it was found to be quite unfit for consumption.

If we still look for another exciting cause of sickness, we soon find it in the disappointment that nearly every one of the colonists experienced as soon as they had settled down, if not before. They had never bargained with themselves for toil and trouble. They had looked forward to the New World and its marvellous islands as to a land, figuratively speaking, flowing with milk and honey, a land where gold and precious stones were to be picked up in every stream and on every hill; and here they were confined to a green shore, beautiful enough in all conscience, but where neither gold nor precious stones were to be found, and all beyond the mountains there were warlike tribes, that they were led to believe would kill and eat them if they but ventured to cross the horizon.

And there soon would be no chance of returning to their native land, for Columbus was to send back the ships for stores, retaining only a few which he should need in prosecuting his explorations.

So even as the children of Israel murmured against Moses in the desert, so did these Spanish settlers now cry out against their chief and viceroy Christopher Columbus.

Nor was our hero without grief and sorrow now. His golden dreams had also vanished. The massacre of his first colonists had made a deep and sorrowful impression on

him. He had hoped to find them all well, happy, and flourishing, and to find also great cargoes of stores of every kind, including gold. But alas! they were dead, and the ships were now to return to Spain empty, to bear to the King and Queen the sad story of massacre and ruin.

Then he too fell ill, and but for the kind nursing and attention of his young brother Diego, no doubt his troubles would soon have been ended and the grave closed over him.

Even when our hero was at his worst he had daily reports brought to him as to the progress of the colony, and in bed he received his officers and his overseers and carried on all his plans.

About this time, too, hoping thereby to raise the spirits of his people, Columbus sent the gallant Ojeda into the interior of the country to explore and if possible to find gold.

Just before the twelve vessels started for the long voyage to Spain, Ojeda's chief officer returned bringing glad tidings. Gold was found in abundance, and the natives had received the explorers most kindly and hospitably.

This good news helped to restore the Admiral to health, and brightened the hearts of everybody. There was something worth writing about to his sovereigns after all.

Diego had not told his brother everything that was occurring in the young colony, fearing to delay his convalescence. He had not told him, for instance, that Diaz de Pisa, one of his chief officers, was all but in open mutiny, and had sworn in a large number of malcontents with the object of seizing one of the ships and returning to Spain with evil accounts of the country and also of Columbus.

As soon, however, as our hero discovered the plot he put a heavy hand on it, and the ringleaders were seized and thrown into prison, intending to send them home as soon

as his brother Bartolomé should come out with his new fleet.

But this was not the end of discontent and mutiny, as the sequel will show.

CHAPTER IV.

TOIL AND TROUBLE.

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS was about the last man in the world to be content with half measures. *Aut Cæsar aut nullus* might have been his motto. Samples of gold were all very well, but he determined, now that he was once more in fairly good health, to get up a great expedition and march into the interior for the purpose of establishing mines and getting to the source of the wealth itself. If rivers rolled down their sands of gold, and if nuggets were found on bare hillsides and on the surface, what might he not expect in the bowels of the earth itself?

And so he got up an expedition in force.

On the twelfth of March, with cavalry and infantry all armed to the teeth and numbering but little under five hundred souls, the Admiral left the newly-formed colony, the government of which he placed in the hands of his brother Diego and Friar Boil, and commenced the toilsome ascent of the forest lands, that stretched upwards to the high lands of the interior.

The only thing he had to fear was the treachery of Boil. The town itself was well walled and could withstand the assault of an enemy, but rebellion might soon put an end to the colony as it had to Navidad.

With Columbus went his engineers and artificers of all kinds, for one of the first things to be done was the building

of a great fort or stronghold, capable of keeping back the wild tribes that had their homes in the mountain fastnesses of Cibao.

The upward march was delayed at the commencement for want of a road of sufficient width to take on horses and munitions of war. But this difficulty was at length overcome by the pluck of some young soldiers who had served in the siege of Granada. They took charge of a party of labourers, and yard by yard a road was made through the forest and jungle.

Then the little army was taken over, and no sooner had Columbus gained the ridge of the hill, than he was struck almost dumb by the richness and extreme beauty of the wide-spreading plains and valleys that lay beneath. Here indeed was a land flowing with milk and honey, a veritable paradise on earth. Flowers and verdure and splendid trees were all beneath, and streamlets went winding through many a verdant strath, with villages on their banks, the smoke curling up from their humble roofs.

"Why, here the Queen herself might have a palace!" said Columbus to one of his officers.

"It is indeed a royal plain," was the reply.

"And that shall be its name," said Columbus.

The country beneath was therefore called the Vega Real.

But when the little army began to descend into the plain, the humble villagers might well have mistaken the glittering host with their prancing war-horses, their splendid uniforms, their cuirasses of brass or steel, their nodding plumes and martial music, for beings from beyond the clouds. They fled before them nevertheless. These simple natives had never seen horses before, and naturally enough thought the steed and man was one and the same animal, a kind of centaur.

After journeying for a long distance across this luxuriant

and beautiful country, Columbus and his army arrived at the banks of a wide rolling river, the Yaqui. He called it the River of Reeds, but it was really the same that he had before named the Rio del Oro or River of Gold.

They encamped here for the night, and crossing next morning continued the march, sometimes fording other streams with golden sand, sometimes journeying over verdant flowery plains, and at other times finding themselves in the centre of splendid forests that were dark even in daylight.

They came to the end of the Vega Real at length, and now a great range of mountains confronted them. This led up into the land of gold.

But the beauty of the landscape was changed now. The spreading mahogany and other giant trees, and even the noble palms gave place to straggling pines, and heaths bedecked the ground instead of flowers of the valley. Many places, too, they found quite barren and sterile.

But they also found gold.

They considered themselves now quite in the centre of the land of promise, for they had journeyed nearly seventy miles from the colony and town of Isabella. On the banks of a stream, and on a little hill round three sides of which flowed the river Xantique, they commenced the building of a strong fortress. So willingly did everyone work that this was completed in a surprisingly short time. It received the name of St. Thomas.

Meanwhile one of Columbus's officers was sent to continue the exploration, and some time afterwards he returned with such glowing accounts that the Admiral concluded to make this fort permanent.

He therefore garrisoned it with sixty men, under the charge of the officer called Margarit, another of Fonseca's pretty favourites.

He also commenced the construction of a good road all the way to Isabella, and returned to his colony about the end of March in high glee.

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Alas! he returned to trouble and sorrow. The town was not only threatened with an epidemic, but with famine as well, thanks to the forethought of Fonseca.

Already many men had died, and many were down with fever. It does not seem, however, to have been that fearful illness which sailors call "Yellow Jack," but a kind of intermittent fever, else no doubt the whole population of the town would have been sacrificed. Even now the commissariat was unable to cope with the trouble, and there was a dearth of medicines and doctors as well.

There is little doubt that the settlement of Isabella was badly situated from a health point of view. It stood on a plain, which, after rains, the tropical sun turned into a malarious marsh, the exhalations from which were so deadly that even the strong ozone of the contiguous sea was unable to destroy its virulence.

All the flour having been finished, and knowing the value of hard work in times of sickness, Columbus caused those among them who were well enough to grind at the mills. Those who did not work thus were condemned to short rations, and among them was crafty Friar Boil, who, being a priest, considered that he ought to be exempt. The breach, therefore, between the Admiral and him was much widened, and I may as well say at once that it was never bridged over.

Columbus took another plan of stamping out the sickness. He raised his army again, and sent them off under the command of brave Ojeda to the fort of St. Thomas, with orders to place the men and horses under Margarit, while he, Ojeda, took over the fort.

This was done no doubt for the purpose of relieving Margarit, or probably because the Admiral knew that the latter was less headstrong than Ojeda. You must remember, reader, that a brave man does not necessarily make a good commander. The gallant Ojeda knew no fear, and trusted everything to wild *elan* and "go." He had the splendid courage of the Scottish Highlander without his forethought. Ojeda never looked before he leapt; he looked after he had leapt, and people who do this have an unlucky habit of jumping out of the frying-pan to land in the fire.

Margarit had orders from Columbus, given through Ojeda, to take the little army and march into the interior for the purpose of exploration, and to give the savage king Caonabo a friendly call.

Now, instead of obeying orders, Margarit only went a little way into the mountainous regions. They were not good enough for him, he seemed to think, so he turned back, and marched his men away down into the beautiful and fertile Vega Real.

This unmitigated scoundrel Margarit (whom, had I been Columbus, I should have hanged by way of encouraging the other scoundrels, notably Boil,) took up his quarters among the innocent, kindly people of the plains, and set about enjoying himself to the extent of his desires; and his soldiers did the same. I shall not sully my pages by describing the way in which the poor natives were treated.

Margarit refused point-blank to be ordered to proceed on his explorations by the commission appointed by Columbus ere he started in his three caravels, to prosecute his discoveries. The Admiral had sailed west on the 24th of April, and just two months after he had gone Bartolomé, the other brother of Columbus, arrived from Spain with three ships and provisions.

This strengthened young Diego's hands somewhat. He

was president of the Commission of Governors, but what could he do with a fellow like Boil under him?

One cannot help wondering that men like Margarit and Boil, the former appointed and trusted by his King, the latter a dignitary of the Church, could have descended to such depths of infamy as they did in the absence of Columbus.

Margarit awakened one morning to find that he had plunged too far into the slough of mutiny and rebellion to get out again. What should he do? Whenever the Admiral returned he would assuredly reckon with him, and probably send him to Spain in chains. This would never do. He, Margarit, must get beforehand with Columbus. Happy thought! if he could get Boil to join him they could steal or take by force the caravels that Bartolomé had brought out, and so sail back to their own country. So he established communications with Boil, then marched down upon Isabella with his disorganized and demoralized little army.

Diego and his brother were powerless, so the thing was done, and the malcontents sailed away to Spain, there to bring accusations of every sort against their great and good commander, Columbus.

Now that I come to think of it, I should have hanged Boil as well as Margarit. Granting that hanging is the worst use you can put a man to, I should have tried to bear with the loss of such a couple of cherubs as Margarit and Boil. They should have swung.

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When the Admiral weighed anchor on the twenty-fourth of April he sailed to Cuba, and coasted along its southern shores, taking notes of all he saw.

He then sailed southwards and discovered Jamaica, which he named Santiago.

Although not without considerable opposition, for the natives resisted the landing with wild yells and clouds of

arrows, he took formal possession of the island, after which, seeing no harm was meant them, the savages made peace. They were a very warlike race, and had hundreds, nay even fleets, of great canoes, some of them, made from a single tree, being over ninety feet long.

Columbus continued to cruise among the West India Islands, discovering and naming new territory for his king and country for some months.

But the toil and struggle told hard against him, his system being worn out with the effects of fever even before he had started.

It is no wonder, therefore, that at last he completely broke down, and when in September the caravels reached the new colony, he lay apparently at the point of death—too ill even to know Bartolomé.

No wonder that in after years we find Columbus writing to Diego his son thus: "Make much of your brother; he has a good disposition, and is now leaving his boyhood." (He referred, of course, to young Fernando.) "Ten such brothers would not be too many. *Never have I found better friends on my right hand and on my left than my brothers.*" The italicizing is mine.

Yes; and now in this sad time of sickness and affliction he found Bartolomé and young Diego brothers indeed in every sense of the word.

Columbus, after five long months of illness and idleness, was well at last.

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Now, very shortly after Columbus became convalescent—as soon, indeed, as he could be seen—there came to Isabella his old friend Guacanagiri.

This friendly cacique brought bad news, however.

The cruelties of Margarit towards the innocent inhabitants of the Vega Real had been such that, fearing a renewal of

it, they had risen in arms, and already ten of the Spanish soldiers who had been roving about the plains, living the lives of daring and reckless freebooters, had been killed.

Guacanagiri offered his services to fight against the tribes, at the head of whom was the fierce Caonabo. This man seemed, like Ojeda, to love fighting for fighting's sake. He was not only fierce, but, for a savage, very intelligent, and the number of his warriors was legion.

Caonabo would have liked to have roasted every white man alive, or massacred them, as he had done the unfortunate men of Fort Navidad.

Fort St. Thomas was a standing eyesore to this proud chief, and he determined to reduce it, nay, more, to raze it to the earth, and put its defenders to the knife.

More easily said than done. The river protected three sides of the fort, a deep ditch the other, and Ojeda with his fifty soldiers were behind the walls.

Caonabo, therefore, came down on it with ten thousand naked furies armed with bows and arrows and war-clubs, to say nothing of war-cries, which are somewhat flustering before one gets used to them. Ojeda, however, was not the man to be frightened by naked, yelling natives with spears and bows.

"The more the merrier, my brave men," he said. "Let them taste the lombards."

Then the guns thundered out, and the savages, being closely packed together, suffered terribly.

Caonabo was wise enough, therefore, to retire, and to trust now to reducing the garrison by siege and famine.

Thus, then, owing to the rebellion and iniquities of one man, the wretched Margarit, Columbus's schemes were overthrown, and instead of pacifying the inhabitants, he was compelled to make war upon them.

CHAPTER V.

BATTLE ON THE PLAINS.

COLUMBUS, like a wise commander, commenced to build a series of forts from the shore all along towards St. Thomas. It did not take long to throw up strongholds like these, quite formidable enough to repel savages.

Meanwhile Ojeda found himself and his little garrison almost starved. This did not suit him. Therefore he made many a raid and sally with a portion of his soldiers, and though Caonabo's men were everywhere in ambush, he always succeeded in putting them to the rout with great slaughter.

But our hero was far too ill yet to take personal charge of the little army, so he intrusted the work of carrying on war to his brother Bartolomé, on whom he conferred the title of Adelantado, or Governor of the Indies, under himself the Viceroy.

So well and briskly did Bartolomé work that the Spanish forces were soon got well in hand, and sufficiently powerful to punish an under-cacique of the chief of the Vega Real for the murder of the ten Spanish freebooters. These Spaniards had richly deserved their fate, nevertheless. The chief himself, who only desired justice, then made peace with Columbus.

But there still was the warlike Caonabo to try conclusions with, and it was to repress his hordes that the forts were built.

Meanwhile fortune favoured the brave, and the arrival of Torres from Spain with four caravels laden with provisions, and bringing out more colonists, among whom were many artisans, helped to put everyone in good temper.

Moreover, the Queen herself had written very nice letters to Columbus, and issued a proclamation to the new colony, demanding its implicit obedience to their viceroy on pain of her displeasure.

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There was no end to the dashing valour of young Ojeda. His name soon became a terror to the savage army of Caonabo, and great was the slaughter of that fierce chief's men every time Ojeda chose to sally forth from his stronghold. Caonabo was obliged at last to raise the siege and withdraw his forces. Though he did not positively retreat, he retired for strategical purposes.

I have now to relate an adventure of bold Ojeda's that certainly smacks of the marvellous as well as the romantic, and shows how daring and reckless a soldier this little athlete was.

One day, while Columbus sat cogitating with himself in his house at Isabella, he was surprised by a visit from young Ojeda. The soldier made his obeisance to his viceroy, and seated himself at his command.

"I am glad to see you, Ojeda," said the Admiral. "I was only thinking about you at this moment. This wild chief must, I fear, remain a standing menace to our colony, and we are not strong enough to carry war into his country."

"That is what I came to talk about, your highness," said Ojeda. "If you will give me permission, I shall myself enter his territory and carry him off by force and strategy."

"You will? You can?"

"I will, and I believe I can. I am at all events anxious to try."

"But how? Explain, pray."

"I would rather not, if you will be so gracious as to excuse me."

"Very well. Use your own plans and means; but I really

fear you are going to attempt some foolhardy feat of arms, which may cost me the life of my most valiant officer."

"Oh," cried Ojeda laughing, "I do not intend to use any arms at all except those God has given me. These," he added, patting his biceps, "if I get these round Caonabo he will experience a slight difficulty in getting clear."

"Very well, my good Ojeda, I leave it all to yourself. Only be careful."

"Oh, most careful, Admiral. You shall see."

Then Ojeda took his leave.

This madcap soldier had noticed that Caonabo's men had often been very much struck by the sound of the evening bell, as it was borne upon the breeze from the church of Isabella. These savages were exceedingly superstitious, and imagined that the bell was the voice of spirits talking to the Spaniards.

The bell was *turey* or heavenly, just as every pretty thing possessed by the white men was *turey*, especially bright metals.

Back went Ojeda to his fort, and the first thing he did was to have a set of very strong manacles polished till they glittered like silver.

Then he chose ten of his very bravest soldiers and ten of the best horses, each man being armed to the teeth, and determined to do or to die.

Away they rode straight into the enemy's territory. The breath of the natives seemed taken away by this piece of audacity. But Ojeda hastened to explain that he came to make peace, and waving the bright manacles aloft, he desired them to conduct him and his followers into the presence of the Carib cacique.

This they did, and the reckless soldier soon found himself face to face with the bravest and boldest chief in all the island, surrounded by warriors so strong and numerous

that they could have destroyed these brave men in a minute,—had Caonabo but held up his finger,—and eaten them, horses and all, afterwards.

But Ojeda was as good a diplomatist as he was a brave soldier. He leapt from his horse, and after making many bows and salaams, held out the beautiful glittering manacles, of the use of which Caonabo had not the slightest knowledge.

"My royal master, the king of the heaven-sent Spaniards, desires to make peace," he told the chief, "and to be friendly with you for ever; and he has sent this *turey* gift to you, and will give you many more if you visit him and come to terms."

The chief's eyes began to sparkle. He wanted the manacles at once, and held out his hand. Ojeda pretended to misunderstand him, and shook the hand.

"He will give you the great bell, if you make peace, that with its spirit voice speaks to the people, and is able to protect you from all your enemies."

Caonabo consented to come with Ojeda forthwith; but, as befitted his rank, he determined to take with him a great force of armed men. This, of course, Ojeda could not well object to, although he greatly feared the treachery of the chief. Ojeda prayed to the Virgin to give a better turning to events, and so trusted to fate. The march commenced, and while journeying together Ojeda did all in his power to ingratiate himself with the Carib chief.

One day, while yet a distance of nearly one hundred miles from Isabella, Ojeda once more produced the glittering manacles, and proposed not only that the chief should wear them but be mounted on his, Ojeda's, splendid horse. He could thus march the remainder of the journey in state suitable to his high dignity.

"If," continued Ojeda, "you come down with us to the river and bathe, I will then put on the *turey* gift and give you the horse."

The Carib was delighted. He had never been on horseback, but thought nothing in life was easier than riding.

So the chief quickly performed his ablutions. Then, according to promise, Ojeda duly mounted him, and next he put the manacles on his wrists.

Caonabo was just beginning to find out that, beautiful though these bracelets were, they were somewhat restrictive to his freedom, when Ojeda sprang up behind him. The daring soldier rode right up to Caonabo's army, who were thunderstruck at the gallant appearance of their chief on horseback; then he made a sweep or two away from the savages, but came back each time. Finally he made the largest sweep of any, and did not return. He grasped the chief's arms, and rode right away with him, as if he had been a child or a young girl with whom he desired to elope.

And now Ojeda and his men plunged into a forest, and there they bound the chief hands and feet, threatening him with instant death if he made the slightest resistance.

Ojeda's adventure was not yet freed from all danger, however, for there was a long way before that gallant little body of horsemen—forests to penetrate, rivers to cross, and villages filled with armed savages either to avoid entirely or to gallop madly through. Had a horse stumbled the consequences might have been fatal and fearful. But conquering all danger and difficulty, Ojeda the brave rode at last quietly into Isabella, and handed over his prisoner.

Columbus might have done well to have chopped this fellow's head off at once, for he confessed to the crime of massacre at the fortress of Navidad, and indeed seemed to glory in it. But our hero was a very merciful man, so he kept a strict watch over the fierce chief, determining that, on his return to Spain, he would take him there to be dealt with by the Queen.

(As I wish to be done with this Caonabo, I may as well

state now that he did embark with Columbus on his return voyage, but his proud heart was broken, and the hardships of the sea did the rest. He died long before the ships reached Spain.)

As the result of this capture a brother of Caonabo's took to the field at the head of a large fierce army, contingents being sent to strengthen it from every other chief in the island, except Guacanagiri. He remained true to his old friendship, and his people fought for Columbus.

It is said that the enemy on the day of battle was nearly 100,000 strong. This is, no doubt, a great exaggeration, but still it was a very large one.

The Spanish army was led on by Columbus himself and his brother Bartolomé. The infantry was divided, and attacked the flanks of the unwieldy body of savages; while, shortly after, Ojeda attacked with the cavalry in front.

But the thunder of the lombards and the steady fire of the arquebuses completely paralysed the savages, and threw them into inextricable confusion, so that they were mowed down by the hundred. They were soon a mere mob or rabble.

Again I restrain my pen, for the butchery that followed was too dreadful for description.

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Peace was now made, and soon after gold washing and mining were commenced in earnest.

Before the great fight in the plains had taken place, Columbus had sent Torres with four caravels back again to Spain, laden with woods, dye-stuffs, cotton, and all the gold he could collect.

It was absolutely necessary to send also some one to refute the vile calumnies that by this time Boil and Margarit had no doubt spread at court concerning the doings of our hero, and Diego the brother was despatched for this purpose.

Diego did his duty well and nobly, and returned with three caravels; and with him was an officer of the name of Aquado, whom Ferdinand had sent out in order to form an unbiased opinion as to the state of affairs in the colony.

Columbus was then in the plains, and this Aquado proved himself a most disagreeable jack-in-office indeed. It seemed to be his intention to usurp even the government of the colony. He gave it out that he had been sent by the King to listen to all complaints against Columbus, and to make a note of them before leaving again for Spain.

The rumour now went out that Columbus and his family would be entirely superseded, and this appeared to raise more enemies around him. He was a foreigner. He was a man of Genoa, and not a Spaniard. This is what the grumblers said. Why should he, a mere upstart sprung from the very dust of a weaver's shop, dare to lord it over young men and cavaliers belonging to the best blood and best families in Spain?

Columbus was busy on a tour over the island, and everywhere engaged in pacifying the people, when the news of Aquado's arrival and doings reached him. He hastened at once to Isabella. Instead, however, of putting Aquado down he treated him cordially, but with a certain amount of hauteur that the jack-in-office could ill brook.

Columbus, however, in consultation with his brothers, now determined to return to Spain and face his accusers, chief of which were Boil and Margarit. So the caravels were got ready to sail, and Francisco Roldan was appointed chief magistrate of the colony under the governor Bartolomé.

I wish the reader to remember this man Roldan, because, although he had often shown he was clever, he turned out a rebel at last.

The caravels were almost ready, but not loaded up with

the gold and curios and dye-woods and specimens of all the riches of these islands which our hero meant to take home with him, when a tornado of greater violence than the oldest Indian had ever remembered swept over the island. The thunders roared, the lightnings flashed, and, although it was mid-day, at times it was as dark as night. The wind was terrible in its violence. Whole towns and even forests were scattered before it. The caravels were whirled and tossed about at their anchorage as if they had been corks, dashed against each other, and dashed on shore. Several were sunk with all hands—the only one, indeed, that came safely out of the terrible storm was the little *Niña*.

The storm caused much delay, and entailed the building of a new vessel from the wreckage of those that had been cast upon the beach.

But two caravels were ready at last. The Admiral took the *Niña*, with many sick passengers, not caring to sail with Aquado—to be even civil to whom must have jarred upon the great man's nerves.

On their passage homewards the two caravels anchored for a short time at Guadeloupe, for the purpose of taking in further curios, fruit, and vegetables.

Almost the first canoe that came off brought two strangely-dressed men, whom Columbus knew at once, though they looked more savage now than any of their almost naked companions. These were our old friends Alard and Galway Will.

It is needless to say that they had a friendly welcome. As soon as they were able, through the kindness of the Admiral, to make themselves presentable, they came aft and told their long story, which, as it is a very romantic one, I may some day have the pleasure of writing.

But they had been taken prisoners by the Caribs; Gabriel and Juan Doloroso had both died, and they were made

slaves, and retained in the mountain fastnesses until recently, when the battle of Vega Real and the capture of Caonabo combined to set them free.

The Admiral was exceedingly kind to the Englishman and Irishman, and they were soon happier than ever they had been. Then Columbus had not forgotten the messages sent out by Nita, and was glad to note the look of joy with which Alard received them.

"Oh," he said, "Nita may yet be mine!"

"And Bridget mine. Dear señor, you did not see Bridget at all—did you?" said Will.

"No," said Columbus smiling.

"Ah, who knows," said Galway Will, "but Bridget may be dead or married, and my mother and my sister and the sow also."

"No, no," said the Admiral; "I have no doubt Bridget is quite as faithful to you as I believe Nita remains to Alard. Though," he added, "the sow may be dead."

This was not the only romantic turn to our story that took place at this island. A young Carib lady of rank had heard of the great misfortunes and sufferings of the Carib chief of Cibao, and fell in love with him, although she had never seen him. She came off now, however, and begged Columbus to permit her to remain in the ship, to comfort the chief in his exile.

Columbus was good-hearted, and he granted her request. Now that he had left the island of Española he no longer kept Caonabo in chains, but only guarded. He began to think that if he could but convert the man to Christianity he would pardon him after all, and bring him back again from Spain. But, as I before said, Caonabo died, and the Carib lady almost broke her heart.

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The caravels arrived after a long voyage, and once more

Christopher Columbus was invited to come and tell his story to the Queen.

His reception by the populace, however, was not so ardent this time, for, from no fault of his own, he had made many foes, most notable among whom was Fonseca.

Boil, Margarit, and Aquado were powerless to do him aught of injury, so highly did he rank in her majesty's estimation. Indeed during the interview between the great hero and their majesties those men's names were never even mentioned. But Columbus was ordered to get another fleet ready, and to sail once more in search of lands even farther off still than the West Indies.

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Both Alard and his friend Galway Will now slip out of our story. Through the influence of Columbus, who had so befriended them, humble though they were, they received commissions in the Spanish army. Shortly after this Alard married his first love, and I trust lived happy ever after. They do say that his descendants, the Tallertes, hold good positions even till this day in the south of Spain.

Galway Will, however, could not forget the old country, and so as soon as he had put together a little money he returned to Ireland. Whether he found all well there history does not say, but as he never came back to Spain it may be presumed that he did; and that he married Bridget, and for the rest of their lives did his best to maintain his old mother, his sister, and the sow.

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Surely we can afford a sigh to the memory of poor faithful Guacanagiri. He certainly never was a soldier, yet in his humble way he took the Admiral's part and ever befriended him. What was his reward? Why, he lost all caste with the other chiefs, and was indeed looked upon as a rebel by them. This he could have borne, but the ingratitude of

the Spaniards cut him to the quick. For although his forces had stood by theirs at the battles in the Vega, he was included among those who had to pay taxes.

Now Guacanagiri was exceedingly poor, yet he was, in the absence of his friend Columbus, treated even more harshly than any of the other caciques. He left his country, therefore, or, to put it more truthfully, he was driven from it. He died a poor lonely outcast and wanderer among the mountains.

Poor Guacanagiri! he was equal, if not superior, to any Spaniard that ever drew sword in Española. Yet such was his sad fate.

CHAPTER VI.

MORE REBELLION.

AT the time Columbus started on his next great voyage of discovery both his boys were at court as pages, showing that Queen Isabella had not forgotten to be kind to our hero's kith and kin.

In fitting out this new fleet the Admiral had to undergo a repetition of all the trouble and insult that Fonseca could heap upon him, with the evident intention of worrying him and delaying his voyage.

Columbus, too, at this time was very much reduced in health, owing to the terrible hardships and trials he had endured abroad. Among other trouble he was suffering from rheumatic gout. This would not tend to improve his temper, and may account for the fact that he one day lost it entirely when a minion of Fonseca's insulted him on the poop. Columbus wasted no words on the fellow; he

just made a rush at him, and fairly and squarely kicked him off the poop.

"Go and tell your master that!" said Columbus, with as much *sang froid* as he could muster. But he plainly meant to imply that it would gratify him extremely to serve Fonseca in precisely the same way.

On this cruise Columbus divided his forces or ships into two little fleets, and sent one ship and two caravels straight off from Gomera, in the Canaries, in order to take assistance to the colony of Española and his two brothers as speedily as possible.

He himself, with the other ship and two caravels, sailed farther south, being determined to cross the Atlantic on a parallel of latitude much nearer to the equator, and sail on until he should touch land.

He told his officers that the first land he reached he should name after the Holy Trinity. It was somewhat strange, therefore, that this first-sighted land should be three tall mountain peaks. Such a thing as this, which nowadays we would think but a trivial coincidence, made a lasting impression on a superstitious, though deeply religious, mind like that of our hero's.

But the little fleet had been long, long at sea before sighting these mountain peaks. For many weeks they had been becalmed, the ships lying on the still heaving bosom of the deep as quietly and listlessly as basking sharks, while, tortured with thirst, the men were scorching in the terrible heat.

Some of the old terrors of the unknown ocean took hold of the crews during these times, and many of them gave themselves entirely up for lost, or thought they were drifting near and more near to some fearful spot where no wind ever blew, and where they would be burnt up or perish from thirst.

It was the shores of Trinidad, then, that Columbus had

now reached. They found these uninhabited; but further into the interior, where the ground was higher, the blue smoke from many a hamlet rose above the trees and went curling skywards.

The country was everywhere charmingly beautiful, but the savages suspicious and shy. A band of natives in a huge canoe that came out from the shore not far from here sent a shower of arrows into the flag-ship, but on a gun being fired in return they put about and were soon out of danger.

When he had reached the western end of the island of Trinidad, which he named Punta del Arenal, he came with his three vessels into a current of water about six miles wide that made every one tremble for the safety of the ships. The noise was terrific, the motion quite alarming. It was no doubt caused by the meeting of two contrary currents, one portion of the sea being here swollen perhaps by a sudden influx of water from the mouth of one of the mighty rivers which near here find an outlet to the ocean.

The danger from this awful surging current was indeed very imminent. Columbus, however, was never known to turn his back on danger, no matter how great it might be. He boldly steered into and through this ocean race, and the caravels followed his example.

He next found himself in the Gulf of Paria. He encountered another terrible current next day, but not believing it prudent to face it, and so endanger his ships, he sailed more to the north along the shore.

The great mariner marvelled much to find the water around him almost fresh, knowing nothing of the mighty rivers that meet the ocean-tides here and roll them back.

On the sixth of August, being Sunday, and therefore the day of rest even in ships, when such is possible, Columbus anchored near a beautiful and partially cultivated shore. But when his boats landed, it was found that the Indians

had fled. What a lovely land it was—hill and dale and rolling forests, groves of palms, beautiful flowers, bright-winged birds, and chattering monkeys, with the sweet sunshine over all! It was like an earthly paradise.

When the natives were at last induced to show themselves, he found them a bold and warlike though by no means aggressive race of people. They were armed with bows and arrows and shields, had long straight hair, and were partially clad in cotton garments.

Columbus and his men were invited to a bounteous repast at the houses of a great chief and his son, and indeed, on the whole, these innocent people hardly knew how to express all their kindly feelings towards the strangers.

Here not only gold ornaments but pearls were found, but the gold, the natives told them, more in sign language than any other, came from far inland, where dwelt a race of giants who lived on human flesh, and that, moreover, the country swarmed with evil beasts and terrible snakes, so that no one might go there and expect to come out alive.

Leaving Columbus to make friends with the people of this coast, we must return to Bartolomé and Roldan at the town of Isabella.

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Bartolomé, the governor of the colony, was a brave and a resolute man, and soon after his brother left, in March fourteen hundred and ninety-six, according to advice sent, he proceeded to found another city and build a protective fort.

The south side of the island was now chosen, at the sea end of a lovely valley that lay along the river Azuma. On the west bank of this river the town was built, and named San Domingo.

Isabella was now deserted entirely, trees took possession

of even the streets, and the houses fell into ruins; the place, moreover, soon bore a bad name, and few indeed would have ventured into it after nightfall. They say that the region is haunted even till this day, and that on moonlit nights, among the trees, men arrayed in all the pomp and panoply of war may be seen in grim array, though they vanish into thin air if one dares approach them.

Bartolomé next paid a visit to Xaragua, a district ruled over by Behechio, with whom his sister Ana—we shall call her that—lived since the capture of her husband, the fierce Caonabo. Although much opposed to the paying of tribute at first, this chief and his sister soon yielded, and friendship was formed.

Meanwhile a rebellion of the people of Vega Real took place. However amiable the chief might be, he found he must protect himself against the continued cruelties and insults of the Spaniards. The insurrection, however, was speedily stamped out, for Bartolomé marched against the assembled caciques, and, taking them by surprise, utterly routed them.

The governor's chief difficulty lay in ruling his own brutal soldiery and the ne'er-do-weel portion of his little colony. Had they only behaved with honesty and decency towards the natives, all would have been well.

Behechio, the chief of Xaragua, proved himself a perfect gentleman, and his kindness, to say nothing of that of his sister, was very great towards the Spaniards.

The next sad occurrence in Española was the mutiny of Roldan. He had been only a servant of kind-hearted but simple-minded Columbus, who told Bartolomé that there was much good in the man's character, and so he promoted him to power.

Roldan got plenty of the scum of the colony—those who had no moral character, and no desire to live in peace and

work for their own and neighbours' good—to join his standard, and after an attempt to capture a fort he marched into good Behechio's land, and there gave his followers *carte blanche* in the matter of every form of crime and licentiousness.

While Roldan was here, unfortunately that portion of Columbus's fleet which had been despatched straight on from Gomera, while the Admiral bore up for the south and west, struck this coast. Roldan saw his opportunity, and was quick to act thereon. He pretended to be in command of this part of the colony, and thus succeeded in getting many of the seamen to join his standard.

When Columbus at length arrived, Roldan was still the terror of Xaragua, and refused to be guided by Columbus. He was brought to terms at last, however, though the Admiral, much against his will, was obliged to retain him in office.

This was not the last of the troubles that Columbus had to deal with before the colony was settled for a time on a kind of peaceful basis. There was still another mutiny, caused by a young spark of the name of Guevara, who had fallen in love with a daughter of Ana, after he had been ordered to leave the island. This did not suit Roldan, for he also was smitten in that direction. So the ex-rebel Roldan caught the insubordinate Guevara, and sent him in chains to the new fort of San Domingo.

Guevara had a cousin called Mujica, who at once gathered malcontent soldiers around him and marched to rescue the too ardent lover. But Columbus quickly routed the mutineers, imprisoned the ringleaders, and put Mujica to death.

It was necessary, I have no doubt, still I almost feel sorry for poor headstrong Mujica, who had so boldly taken his cousin's part. If hanging was needed at all, I should have begun by stringing up Roldan.

Peace now reigned for a time over all the fair luxuriant land. But alas for the bright dreams of poor Columbus! a cloud was already rising that was soon to burst into awful storm, and hurry our hero on towards his grave.

CHAPTER VII.

COLUMBUS IN CHAINS.

THE reader will no doubt remember that it was Queen Isabella far more than King Ferdinand who had exploited the first expedition of Columbus. He was to her, and ever would remain, a hero.

The king, however, had been but lukewarm from the beginning. True enough he had been more than rejoiced at our hero's great discoveries, hence the magnificent welcome he vouchsafed to him on his first arrival. But Ferdinand was poor, his money was squandered in ambitious plots and plans, and the gold did not come in so fast from the West Indies as he had expected. Not even so fast, he told the queen, as Columbus had promised it should.

"He has deceived us," he said once with bitterness, "he has deceived us with fair words."

"He has been unfortunate," said the Queen.

"He is a mere visionary," replied the King sternly, "and I for one would have sided with good Fonseca, and never have agreed to the concessions of wealth and royalty which, pardon me, your majesty heaped upon him. There may be truth," he added, heedless of the Queen's tears, "there may be truth in what Boil and Margarit and Aquado say. Fonseca believes them. Fonseca saw through the machina-

tions of Columbus from the first. And now, behold, every caravel brings home crowds of malcontents, and they positively mob us on the street."

Ferdinand said much more, and poor Queen Isabella was obliged at last to yield to persuasion if not force. So, marvellous to say, Columbus was superseded. And an officer of high rank called Bobadilla was sent out to take viceregal command of the colony in his stead. This Bobadilla was proud, headstrong, and haughty, and his hatred of Columbus, the weaver's son and upstart, had been well fostered by Fonseca.

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Although peace had been proclaimed all over the island of Española at this time, there were still many bands of freebooters scouring the country and committing terrible depredations upon the inoffensive inhabitants of Xaragua. These Roldan and Bartolomé the governor were running to earth and capturing. Seven had already been executed, and five more were prisoners at San Domingo awaiting their doom.

But early on the morning of August twenty-third, fifteen hundred, two vessels were seen lying at anchor off the harbour.

Columbus himself was at that time in the Vega Real, and his youngest brother, Don Diego, was in charge of affairs in San Domingo. The latter immediately despatched a messenger to Columbus to warn him of the arrival, and sent men in a canoe to demand an explanation from the caravels.

The news the men returned with astonished Diego and Miguel Diaz, the military commander, not a little. Bobadilla had arrived, and sent orders that he should be received in state next morning, as he was the new viceroy of all the Indies.

No more high-handed proceedings had ever been carried out, perhaps, than that which took place next day. First and foremost, Bobadilla landed and marched to church to receive high mass, surrounded by a strong body-guard. Next, he ordered Diego to visit him, told him who he was, and that he must at once deliver up the prisoners, the fort, and even the Admiral's house.

Diego refused point-blank. So did Miguel Diaz the commander, who shut the gates of the fort against a man he could not be expected to recognize as viceroy.

Bobadilla thereupon caused his men to smash down gates and doors, and to enter by main force. Not only was this done, but the Admiral's house itself was stormed, his private rooms broken open, his curios scattered, his gold seized, and his papers all confiscated. Nor was this the end. For poor faithful Diego was next seized, loaded with chains, and sent off as a prisoner to one of the caravels.

On the arrival of Columbus himself, he too was put in chains, and imprisoned in the fort.

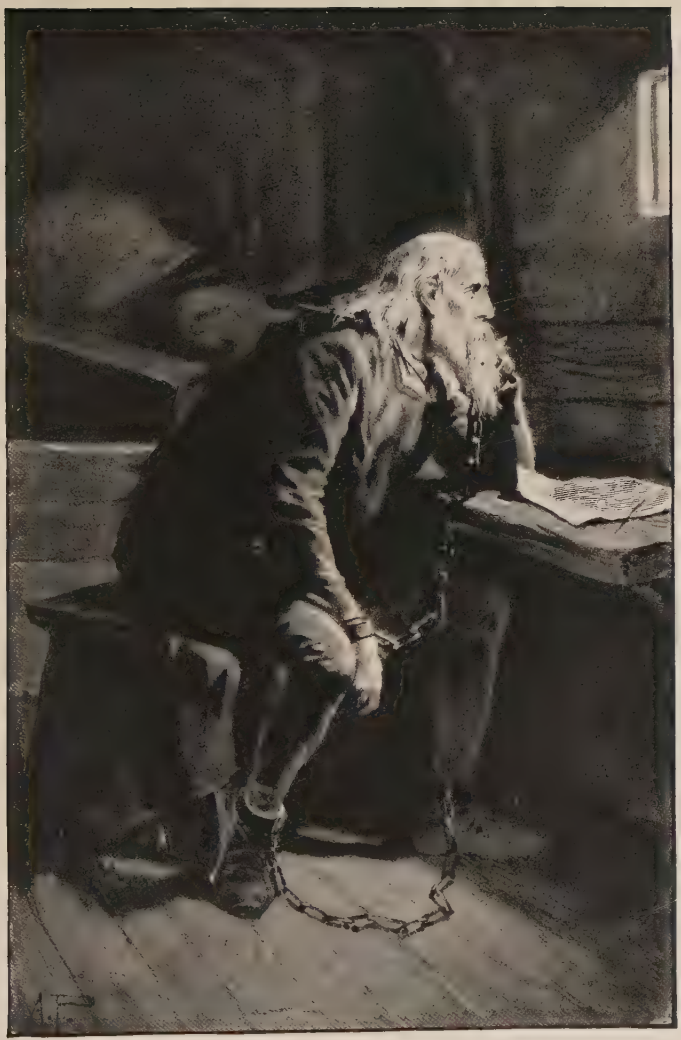
The prisoners awaiting their doom therein—those vile and licentious freebooters, who so richly deserved death—had been liberated, and carried in triumph through the town.

When at length Bartolomé arrived, marvelling much at the message Columbus had found time to send him, he was immediately made prisoner also, loaded with chains, and cast into a dungeon.

This, then, was the method that the odious Bobadilla took of superseding our hero.

In all fairness to Ferdinand, and even to Fonseca, it must be conceded that they had never given orders for such insult and cruelty to be meted out to men who had done so much good to their adopted country.

To say that Columbus was grieved would but poorly



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COLUMBUS IS SENT TO SPAIN AS A PRISONER

represent the state of his mind. For himself he feared nothing. No one could ever rob him of the credit and honour of having discovered the New World. They might take from him all wealth and titles, but they never could take away his good name and reputation.

For himself he feared not even death. In the weak and broken state of his health, death indeed would be almost welcome. But what of his family?—his wife, his poor boys? Would they too be degraded? Would they be banished from court, and—oh, Heaven help them!—be obliged to earn or beg their daily bread?

"O Lord," he was praying one morning, "what great sin have I committed, that Thou should'st let this sorrow fall upon my life?"

Suddenly he heard the rattle of spears and arquebuses in the passage that led to his dungeon.

The heart of our hero smote him uneasily. He had expected death, but could not have believed it would come so soon and sudden as this. It was terrible to have to leave his unfinished work, leave life and all he loved almost without a moment's warning. Yet he braced his nerves to meet what he considered his impending doom.

Vallejo, the captain of the *Gorda*, entered with soldiers.

"Vallejo, what is this? Whither am I to be conducted?"

"Señor Colon," said Vallejo, "I have received orders to take you on board my vessel for passage to Spain."

"Vallejo, are you not taking me to execution?"

"By the life of our good Lady, no. Assuredly am I taking you on board."

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Away sailed the *Gorda*, and once out of sight of land Vallejo and the owner of the *Gorda* came speedily to remove the irons. But this, though thanking them with tears in his eyes, Columbus would not permit. "By the Queen's representa-

tive," he answered, "I have been put in chains, and only she can order their removal."

The voyage was a short one, and every kindness was shown to the unhappy Admiral by Vallejo and the other officers. The two brothers Bartolomé and Diego were also well treated.

The first thing that Columbus did on his arrival in Spain was to send to the Doña Juana de Torres,—a lady at court and a great favourite with the Queen, for she had been the nurse of Prince Juan,—a most pathetic letter which he had written on board.

This letter was read to the Queen, and it touched her majesty to the quick. Even Ferdinand was moved by it.

That Bobadilla had far exceeded his duty, and by placing the great discoverer in chains had heaped insult upon Spain as a nation, they quickly gave the country to know.

Not only Columbus himself but his brothers were soon liberated. A large sum of money was sent the Admiral that he might appear at court. Orders were given at the same time that Bobadilla should be ordered home, and that he must immediately restore to our hero all his papers, his private collection, and the gold he had so wantonly robbed him of.

When Columbus went to court he was received with the very highest honours, and with the Queen's own fair hands he was raised from the kneeling position which he had assumed in order to kiss the hands of his sovereigns.

There are minds and natures that no amount of suffering nor hardship can ruffle or change, but that nevertheless can be softened by one touch of human kindness. Such was that of Columbus. He had been prepared to be received with favour, but not with the gentle and loving respect that the Queen now bestowed upon him. This was indeed the last straw to vanquish such a noble nature as the Admiral's, and

the poor white-haired man placed his hands before his face, and for a time sobbed as though his very heart would break.

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Columbus was once more a people's hero.

Although impulsive the Spaniards are as a nation fond of justice and kind-hearted, and they could not hear of all the disgrace and ignominy which had been hurled upon their great ocean-hero without anger mingled with shame.

The Admiral still had one enemy in high places, however, and it was perhaps through him, Fonseca, that Ovando was appointed to succeed Bobadilla, much to the annoyance and chagrin of our hero, who ought assuredly to have been reinstated as viceroy.

Cristoval Colon, Fonseca had told the king, is no doubt a man of excellent intention, but he is more of a seaman than a military commander, and besides he has aged all at once, and is in reality broken in constitution. We must learn to live even without Cristoval Colon.

Not to be reinstated as governor and viceroy of Española was indeed a hard blow to Columbus. It seems, however, to have been softened somewhat by his being told that his sovereigns wished him to continue his voyages of discovery, knowing that no one else could navigate so well, but that at the end of two years he would be permitted to resume his sway in the Indies.

And with these promises Columbus was fain to be content.

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Ovando sailed on the thirteenth of February, fifteen hundred and two, to supersede Bobadilla, and with an immense fleet, consisting of thirty vessels in all, commanded by Torres, and taking out much live stock, implements of gardening and husbandry, and tools of every description, with over twenty thousand men. It was indeed a kind of exodus from the old country.

This new governor was said to be a man of strict honesty. However, he proved himself a very firebrand among the poor natives, and his atrocious cruelties are so revolting that one hesitates even to read about them. I should be very sorry indeed to darken my pages by anything save the most casual reference to such fiendish work.

Columbus may be said to have now retired into private life, and he lived for a whole year at Granada, his mind being almost constantly engaged on a study of the prophecies, and of a great scheme he had formed for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre.

During his residence here, however, he did not permit his studies to interfere with his private duties to his family. Nor did he forget his old father, who had now gone to reside with his daughter and her husband at Genoa.

I have no proof that during this year at Granada, Columbus visited Genoa. Still, I think, considering our hero's kindly character and his love for home and old times, he is almost certain to have done so.

The old boatman might still be alive, but Christopher would now be the story-teller, and we may easily imagine with what interest he would listen to all the hero's marvellous stories of the foreign countries he had discovered, and all his wild adventures on land and at sea.

But our hero had wilder adventures yet to encounter, and before long we find him once again putting to sea on the last voyage he was destined to make on earth.

His purpose was to discover a strait that he thought must lead through vast continents and on to India. His studies of the ocean currents, and above all of the Gulf Stream, had led him to conclusions which were found to be erroneous, but such confidence had the Queen in his abilities as a navigator that he had only to make his wishes known to receive her support.

Independent of the voyages of Columbus himself there were many others made to the westwards for the sake of discovery and to gain wealth and renown. As soon as our hero had proved that the great ocean could be navigated, there were not wanting plenty of mariners bold and daring enough to undertake almost anything. But of these I need but mention one.

We have all of us a certain amount of respect for bravery and pluck, and there are doubtless among my readers some who would like to learn a little more concerning the gallant and dashing Ojeda.

His career after he left Española and returned to his native land may be briefly told, and it proves that bravery alone is not all that is required to make a man a leader of men.

Ojeda, then, as we know, was a great favourite with Fonseca, and when he expressed a desire to command an expedition to Paria in search of the pearls which Columbus had said were to be found there in abundance, his friend Fonseca was glad to promote his wishes. He even presented him with a copy of one of our hero's charts.

Although in his first voyage Ojeda discovered some new territory, and named a few new places and islands, his success was not of much importance. He had some daring fights with the natives, whom, instead of appeasing as a true-born colonist would have done, he seemed only to have succeeded in irritating. Many of his men were killed or wounded with poisoned arrows, and his actions on the whole left a very bad impression on the minds of the savages as to the character of the white man. On his way back to Spain he landed among the Bahamas, and loaded his caravels with natives, whom he brought to Cadiz and sold as slaves.

The second expedition made by Ojeda sailed in fifteen hundred and two and reached Paria Gulf without much

adventure. The vessels then sailed north, but in a breeze of wind at night got scattered, and for a long time were playing at a kind of naval hide-and-seek along the coast, but finally got together again. Ojeda and his commanders now chose a site for a new colony, built forts, and landed guns. But from bad management the whole business collapsed, and as usual ended in mutiny, Ojeda being put in irons by his own people and brought back to be tried. He was acquitted, as a matter of course, and we next hear of him as a governor of Nueva Andalusia on the mainland.

Juan de la Cosa, our hero's old friend of the *Santa Maria*, went along with Ojeda, and with four caravels and about 300 men they started from San Domingo in November, fifteen hundred and nine. Another commander, Nicuesa, left a fortnight after with five other ships and over 600 men.

Immediately on landing at Calamar, Ojeda, thinking to carry all before him and make his name a terror among the natives, attacked them impulsively at Turbaco. He was utterly vanquished, his little army routed with great slaughter, poor Cosa being among the slain, while he himself wandered in the forest for days before he was found.

But Nicuesa now landed with his troops and turned the tide of warfare.

As usual massacres of the most awful description followed the new victory of the Spaniards over those brave savages, who, after all, had only been fighting for their hearths and homes. Neither age nor sex was spared. The story is altogether too revolting even to think of.

After this Ojeda had many adventures. He made an attempt to govern his territory, which stretched from Cabo de la Vela to Darien, but failed in this, for his people were soon all but starved. Sailing to Española to obtain provisions, his crew mutinied and put him in irons. Pro-

bably this broke his proud spirit, as the privations he soon afterwards had to endure ruined his health, for the ship was wrecked on Cuban shores. The crew, however, escaped, and in time Ojeda found himself once more at San Domingo.

Here he lived a few years, then died in poverty and wretchedness.

His story certainly has a moral to it.

After all one cannot help being a little sorry even for bold, hot-headed Ojeda.

And now we come to the last adventures of our hero Columbus.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LAST VOYAGE.

IF there was one evil deed more than another that, in connection with the career of Columbus, the Spaniards had to be ashamed of, it was that of placing Ovando in the position of viceroy over the Indies in lieu of our hero, deposed. Yes, deposed; there is no other name for it, and there are no other words save those of cowardice and ingratitude, or a combination of both, for the conduct of Ferdinand in permitting Fonseca to make an appointment that teems with flagrant dishonour to Spain.

Look, if you please, on this picture.

Behold Ovando sailing in state from Cadiz, away with his mighty fleet and his tens of thousands of men, surrounded by every luxury and extravagance that money could purchase or credit procure; behold his grandeur and glory in Española, with his aguazil, his physicians, his priests and apothecaries, his two-and-seventy esquires on

foot and on horseback to attend him, all robed in sumptuous attire.

Then behold the great discoverer and hero, he who had brought so much honour and glory to old Spain, leaving port with four poor little cranky caravels, the largest only about seventy tons burden, with few, save his own relations and the kindly monks of La Rabida, to bid him good-bye or to wish him God-speed.

The crews of his vessels all told hardly numbered one hundred and fifty men. And to add insult to injury, he was commanded by Ferdinand not even to touch at Española.

Was it not disgraceful?

Columbus, however, bore that with him of which even his implacable enemy Fonseca could not rob him—a good conscience. He had done his duty, and was at peace with God and man.

Along with Columbus this time sailed his brave brother Bartolomé, and his little son Ferdinand. He had some comfort, therefore, after all.

The voyage across the Atlantic upon the whole was a delightful one, and the health of the prematurely aged Admiral was much benefited thereby. The first land they sighted was the lovely island of San Lucia, and here the vessels lay for four days that the men might enjoy themselves. One of the Admiral's vessels was soon found to be in a dangerously leaky condition, and despite his promise to Ferdinand not to touch at San Domingo, Columbus found it incumbent upon him to anchor there. What follows throws a strong light on the characters of both Columbus and Ovando.

When the former sent to beg of the latter to let him have another vessel to replace the crank and leaky *Gallega*,

he was brutally refused assistance and ordered to depart at once. Now on this very day Torres was about to sail back to Spain, with his fleet of five-and-thirty vessels, but Columbus noticed, with the foresight of a good old sailor, that a hurricane was brewing, and returning kindness for brutality, sent to warn Ovando, and to beg of him to delay the sailing of the fleet. Ovando sent back an insolent message, and away sailed the ships. Away sailed Columbus too, taking refuge for a time in a harbour to the west of San Domingo, but being finally blown out to sea. The four caravels, being well manned and managed, escaped, however.

But how about the fleet that Ovando had so wantonly sent off just as the storm was gathering over the mountains? It is indeed a strange and awful story. The hurricane overtook the ships; Bobadilla and Roldan and many others of Columbus's old enemies were in the largest with all their ill-gotten gold. She broached to and foundered with all hands before the crew had time even to loosen a sheet or shorten sail. Twenty of the others met a like fate. The rest, with one exception, were scattered far and near. The exception is said to have been the weakest in the fleet. She contained all Columbus's worldly effects that Bobadilla had given up, and which were being conveyed to Spain. And she it was that brought the news of the terrible disaster to Cadiz.

Columbus with his tiny fleet sailed westwards till he reached some islands off the Honduras coast, where, after some adventures, he turned southwards along the shore. And now the wildest weather that ever our hero had experienced was encountered. Storm after storm raged for six long weeks. The rain was almost incessant, the season being autumn, and the seas raged mountains high.

But amidst all his troubles, we find Columbus thinking far more about his brave brother Bartolomé, and his little son Fernando, than about himself. The conduct of the boy was gallant in the extreme, and so well did he work that he put many of the crew to shame.

The weather was more favourable about the middle of September, however, and the sea went down, and soon the ships had passed the mouth of the Nicaragua river.

He examined every portion of the coast most carefully, in the hopes of finding out the strait he had come to seek. But all in vain, of course. That strait has not yet been found, though one day, probably, a canal will do duty for it.

Many of the natives about here wore armlets of gold, and assured our hero that the metal was to be found in abundance in Veragua, and he sailed still further south in search of this gold.

On Epiphany Sunday, fifteen hundred and three, after encountering unheard-of dangers from storms of all kinds, with now and then the added terrors of a water-spout, Columbus reached the mouth of the Veragua river in the isthmus. But even the smallest of his ships could not cross the stormy bar, so shallow was the water. He was glad, therefore, to find shelter in another river near to this, which he called Belem, for the weather was once more becoming wild and stormy.

His men, too, were all completely worn out with toil and hardship. The food was nearly exhausted, the few casks of biscuits remaining being filled with maggots, and the ships themselves sadly leaky and crank.

After a heavy storm, a flood came down the river, the ships were driven from their anchorage, collided with, and were all but wrecked on the bar.

Before going further with our narrative, it may be well to make mention of a strange dream or vision that about this time Columbus had. Probably it merely tends to show the state of his feelings at one of the most despondent periods of his life; yet the dream had a good effect upon him, not only at the time, but afterwards, when even in greater danger, and when all hopes of life were fast fading away.

Columbus had been for a long time tossing about on a sleepless couch a prey to bodily pain and to anxiety of mind, but, wearied and sighing, he had fallen into a slumber at last.

"Then," he says, "I heard a piteous voice saying to me: 'O fool and slow to believe and serve thy God, who is the God of all! What did He more for Moses or His servant David than He has done for thee? From the time of thy birth He has ever had thee under His peculiar care. Of the gates of the ocean sea, shut up with such mighty chains, He gave thee the keys. The Indies, those wealthy regions of the world, He gave thee for thine own, and empowered thee to dispose of them to others according to thy pleasure. What did He more for the great people of Israel when He led them forth from Egypt, or for David, whom from being a shepherd He made a king in Judea? Turn to Him, then, and acknowledge thine error, for His mercy is infinite. Fear not to seek Him. Thine age is no impediment to any great undertaking. Thou urgest despondingly for succour. Answer! who hath afflicted thee so many times—God or the world? The promises God hath made thee He hath never broken. He performs to the very letter. He fulfils all that He promises. I have shown thee what thy Creator hath done for thee. The present is the reward for the toils and perils thou hast endured in serving others.'"

The voice seemed now to recede, as if the spirit who talked were going away, but the last faint words that fell on his ear were: "Fear not, but confide! All these tribulations are written in marble, and not without cause!"

Dear reader, was it any wonder that the brave man was cast down? From the very beginning, this voyage—although rich in its results of discovery—seemed doomed to be a terrible one, for the ships were most unseaworthy to start with.

He had been turned away from his own island of Española, where he had begged for help; he had endured more terrible dangers by sea than any of our own brave mariners of the present day ever face; and now he was lying at the mouth of a strange river, sick and ill, with hardly food to put in the mouths of his crew, and, as will presently be seen, with a host of implacable savages burning to sweep down from their mountain fastnesses and destroy him. Add to all this that he was sick and old, and despondent about his son and brother, both of whom he felt that he had dragged with him into all this misery.

"Fear not, but confide!"

Blessed words surely, although heard only in a dream.

Columbus determined that he would confide, ay, and if need were, he would die.

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The Admiral despatched his brother to explore the Veragua river with sixty armed men. The warlike chief Quibian himself became his guide. Not from any friendship he bore him, for he was jealous of the expedition, and fain would have led Bartolomé into an ambush.

From the report brought back to the Belem river, Columbus felt certain he had at last reached the land of gold. He therefore at once selected a site for a settlement, and commenced building fortified houses.

This was too much for the chief. He assembled his men in thousands. And a fierce and hardy race they were, with bodies almost naked, and armed with spears, and bows and arrows.

It was Diego Mendez, a bold and faithful fellow, and a volunteer in this voyage, who first found out the warlike intentions of the chief Quibian.

With all their faults, the Spaniards of those days were undoubtedly a most chivalrous race, and the deeds performed by some of them in the field of battle were truly wonderful. Accompanied only by a ship's boy—certainly a gallant youth—Diego Mendez passed almost unarmed through the army of hostile savages to the hill-top where stood the chief's house. He was unsuccessful in his attempt to gain audience of Quibian, and indeed the wonder is he and the lad ever returned alive at all. But he had seen all he wanted to see, and now proposed the almost foolhardy feat of capturing the chief and all his family.

Bartolomé thought the plan an admirable one. He himself would gladly assist. He was a strong and very energetic man, and fear was a feeling he appears never to have known.

Diego Mendez and he, therefore, with seventy men, crossed the bar in boats and ascended the Veragua river as speedily as possible. In order not to alarm Quibian, Bartolomé, with Diego and three men, advanced to the chief's house. He left his companions at a little distance, and, advancing alone, seized the cacique in his powerful arms. His struggles were in vain, and he was borne along to the boats. After this the main body of the Spaniards advanced, and all Quibian's family was captured.

To catch was one thing, to keep another, and in the darkness of the night that followed the chief escaped, and one by one after this all the other prisoners.

War was now to be waged to the knife. Quibian would hold no further parley, and we cannot really blame him.

The fortified houses being now built, Columbus managed to cross the bar with three of the caravels with the intention of returning to Spain to bring assistance and another fleet with colonists.

He left all the provisions and all the men he could spare, and humbly praying that this new settlement would be more fortunate than the first, he bade his brother an affectionate farewell and embarked.

No sooner were the caravels beyond the bar than the savages attacked in force, and a very desperate battle was the result, which ended in a victory for the Spaniards. It was evident, however, that Columbus had underrated the strength and ferocity of the foe, and had not a contrary wind prevented his leaving the shores, undoubtedly his brother and all in the settlement would have been destroyed, while he himself in his rotten leaking caravels must have foundered at sea.

The Admiral took advantage of his detention to send back Tristan, the captain of one of the caravels, with one last message to Bartolomé. Fourteen men went with him, having orders to bring more wood and water to the ships. The story of this boat is soon told. Bands of armed savages attacked it from both sides of the river, and, under a cloud of arrows, Tristan and all his crew, with the exception of one man, fell never to rise again.

Day after day now passed by, and Columbus wondered that his boat did not return to the caravels. He felt convinced now that something terrible had occurred, but he had only one more boat left, and this he feared to risk.

Once more a bold fellow came forward to act as forlorn hope and to swim ashore from the bar and try to reach the

settlement. His name was Pedro de Ledesma. It deserves to be known, despite the fact that he afterwards became a mutineer.

Fortune favoured him, and in due time he swam back, bringing the sad news of the battle and the massacre, and the critical condition of the settlement.

Luckily the weather was now calm, and so, through the almost superhuman exertions of Diego Mendez and Bartolomé, who transformed two canoes into a kind of raft and got all the stores over the bar and on board the caravels, every one and everything was safe at last, although the other caravel had to be left in the river.

Then all sail was set, and very slowly the vessels left the blood-stained shores that had so nearly been fatal to the Admiral's favourite brother and the brave men left in his charge.

"Fear not, but confide!" The words of his dream came back to the mind of Columbus as the lagging winds now filled the sails. And as they did so he could not but remember with sorrow and contrition his own impatience at being becalmed immediately after he had crossed the bar. There really seemed a Providence in all this.

"Surely," said Columbus to himself, "the Lord is on my side."

CHAPTER IX.

CASTAWAYS.

THE three caravels were so worm-eaten that only constant baling could keep them afloat. It is no wonder, therefore, that the crews, worn out by constant work and

weakened by starvation, murmured against the Admiral because they found him taking a course farther east than they considered desirable.

Columbus was wiser than they.

In their ignorance they left the currents out of their calculations entirely.

As it happened, owing to the clamour of even his pilots, he left the American coast far sooner than he thought was safe. The consequence was that, instead of fetching San Domingo, the first land they touched was the south-western shore of Cuba. Along the coast they managed to beat until they reached Cape Santa Cruz. But the winds were now blowing steadily from the east, and to have attempted to beat up against them all the way to Española would have been madness. The shores of Jamaica were in sight, however, and if he could but get that far, the Admiral would at least be a little nearer to San Domingo, and no worse off than he now was. So he once more set sail.

That was a short but a never-to-be-forgotten voyage. They were entirely at the mercy of the weather. Did it come on to blow harder they should founder; if the wind fell they would fill and sink. Every man worked like a slave, young Fernando like a very hero; while there was not a vessel of any size on board that was not requisitioned for the purpose of baling.

Nearer and nearer they come to the beach. Will they ever reach it? This seems doubtful, for despite all the efforts of the tired despairing men the caravels will keep filling. It is an anxious time for Columbus. He speaks to no one. The men know their duty, and they are doing it. But how earnestly the Admiral prayed may never be known to anyone.

"Fear not, but confide!"

They are close inshore now, and Columbus shouts his orders to the masters of the other caravels. Both are ordered to beach alongside his own vessel.

. . . . . .

They are shipwrecked now on a savage and inhospitable shore, and yet so urgent had the danger been, that as caravel after caravel rushes upon the silver sands a shout of joy goes up from the crews, which is in itself a prayer of gratitude to the Providence that has safely brought them so far through their terrible perils.

Diego Mendez now proved himself to be the hero of the situation—proved that he was not only a brave man but a man of tact and judgment, for he so ingratiated himself with the natives that they brought food daily to the half-sunken caravels, and gratefully received almost anything in return for their services.

The vessels had been beached so closely together that, after cabins were built on the poops and the whole put in a state of defence, the three caravels resembled a little fort surrounded by water.

The danger, however, was extreme. At any time the natives might rise and massacre them, or in a single night their insular castle might be swept away by the waves.

If these unfortunate mariners were ultimately to be saved, therefore, it was urgent that communication should be established with distant San Domingo.

And now the hero Mendez once more came to the rescue, and determined to make a canoe journey all the way to Española, a distance of about one hundred and twenty miles.

In his first attempt to start he was worsted, for, landing to obtain water for himself and the Indians with him at the

east end of Jamaica, he was attacked by savages, made prisoner, and only escaped as if by a miracle. He nevertheless got safely back to the caravels—a coasting journey of more than seventy miles—and after reporting his failure to the Admiral, said he was determined to try again.

And this time not only were two canoes taken, one under the command of Fieschi, a gallant Genoese, and each having five Indians, but Bartolomé with fifty men accompanied them along the shore to the extreme east of the island, and protected them from the natives until they had fairly started.

It was the Admiral's wish that, should the canoes succeed in reaching Española, Fieschi was to return to report their safe arrival, while Mendez should take the first opportunity of returning to Spain with letters to the King and Queen, in which the Admiral described all his new discoveries, the loss of his fleet, and the gallantry and heroism exhibited by his people throughout all their perils.

With much fatigue and danger Mendez and his brave companion Fieschi — the Indians themselves no whit less brave — managed at last to reach the western shores of Española.

Thence they journeyed to Xaragua, where they found the governor Ovando.

One would have thought that the troubles of Columbus and his shipwrecked men would soon after this have come to an end, and that Ovando would have made all haste to rescue them and send them safely home to Spain.

Listen. Although I have every desire to spare the reader's feelings, and all throughout this story have kept bloodshed and massacre as much as possible in the background, the deeds of Ovando in Española were so dreadful, so diabolical, that his name ought to be known to and

detested by every boy or girl who is able to read or even to spell.

He had carried fire and sword and desolation into almost every part of this beautiful land, his only object apparently being to utterly exterminate the natives. That was the use he made of his fine and gallant army; but the atrocities he committed in Xaragua throw into shade any I ever read of, and form in themselves one of the blackest pages in the annals of old Spain.

The good chief Behechio had died, and his sister Anacaona—Ana as we called her—reigned in his stead. She was a friend to the Spaniards and had ever been, and so when the fiend Ovando sent messengers to her announcing his intention of paying her a visit of ceremony, she was so pleased and rejoiced that she made the greatest preparations possible to receive him hospitably and in state. She even summoned all the sub-chiefs to meet him.

The night came, and while the festivities were still at their height, Ovando gave the word, and the dark and awful massacre was commenced. All the chiefs were bound to stakes and burned alive in the houses, young and old were slain, and poor brave kind-hearted Ana was seized and brutally strangled. This was Ovando. This was the man from whom Mendez now begged help for poor shipwrecked Columbus.

It is almost needless to say that he refused it, or put off the Admiral's friends with fair promises; the fact being that he hoped in his secret heart that Columbus would perish.

. . . . . .

The weary months rolled on and on, one, two—five, six, and still no word came from Española, and Columbus had almost given up all hope.

It was then that mutiny broke out in his little insular fort. It began as usual with murmurings and grumbling. "The people were starving," Porras, the captain of the *Santiago* caravel, complained, "and many were sick unto death. Why wait longer here, hoping against hope? Why not prepare canoes, or take the few they had, and attempt to reach Española, as doubtless Diego Mendez had already done?"

The murmuring led to quarrelling, and at last Porras sought to attack the Admiral in his cabin, where he lay helpless and sick. Bartolomé, his brother, defended him at the sword's point, and although Porras and the mutineers retreated, they helped themselves to all the stores they could lay hands upon, and seizing the canoes put to sea.

Foiled, however, in their efforts to cross the sea, and ashamed to give in, they lived at large in the island, robbing and abusing the natives in all directions.

The evil deeds of these miscreants greatly increased the sufferings of those who still remained true to the Admiral in his little sea-girt fortress. For the natives could not well distinguish between the good white men and the bad. They classed them all in the latter category, and therefore commenced to hold aloof from the stranded caravels.

There was every likelihood now that starvation would speedily put an end to the last of Columbus's expeditions. He remembered, however, that in a few days there would be a total eclipse of the moon. On the evening of that day the Admiral had a message sent to the chief caciques of the neighbourhood, demanding their presence at the fort of caravels. On their arrival he explained to them as well as he could that the mutineers were not now under his command, and that they were evil-disposed men, those in the fort alone being good and true friends to the natives, whom

the Great Spirit would bless and shower benefits upon, for the kindness they had already bestowed upon his shipwrecked people. "But," he added, "the Great Spirit is angry with you, and to show his wrath will this night completely darken the moon, and will bring many more calamities upon you, if you bring not food to his people as hitherto."

The stratagem in the end was entirely successful, and for two months longer all seemed to go well.

But at length Columbus and his brother were reduced to despair. The end could not be far away. Even the few faithful men left with the Admiral began to pine and grumble. When, oh, joy! One evening a caravel appeared on the horizon, and came towards the island with all sail set. Diego Mendez and Fieschi had not been drowned, then, and now relief was sent!

But their hopes sank to zero again when a boat arrived from the caravel, that had now cast anchor in the bay, and the Admiral found that only a letter was sent him from the vile Ovando, apologizing for his seeming neglect, and assuring Columbus that he had no ships to send for him and his shipwrecked crew.

The man who brought the note was undoubtedly simply a spy, and had expected to find poor Columbus dead.

"What is to be done now?" said Bartolomé.

"Fear not, but confide!" said the Admiral. "It is at least a comfort to know that Mendez is safe, and I am assured that he will soon find means to send for us."

"Would it not be as well, brother Cristoforo, to try now to make peace with Porras?"

"Yes," assented Columbus, "though I fear it will be in vain."

It was indeed in vain. For the seaman sent by Columbus

—who was too ill now to leave his cabin—brought back an insolent message, and the man reported that Porras had determined to march upon the fort of caravels, capture it, and take all in it prisoners.

Bartolomé's wrath knew no bounds. He towered like a giant above his men as he drew his sword.

"We will meet him," he cried. "Fear not, dear brother, but confide in God, and pray for me."

Poor Columbus! At this time he was far too ill to be capable of anything else save praying.

And now boldly marched Bartolomé forth to meet the rebels with the cowardly Porras at their head. Little recked the brave man that the odds against him were fearful. He had right on his side; he had injustice to punish. The very thought of his poor brother lying sick and weary, but patient and gentle, seemed to nerve his heart, and steel his arm. Towering in his might, a full head higher than any of his companions, a single glance at his stern set face would have told anyone he had come to do or to die.

Porras saw that look of determination, and his cowardly heart smote him. But he hastily gathered five of his strongest men around him. "Let us make a rush for the leader," he cried. "He must be slain first—the rest is easy."

Desperate is now the struggle, loud the shouting and clashing of arms, wild the cries of pain or mortal agony, the birds in terror fly screaming seawards, the Indians at a distance look on aghast. Porras and his men are concentrating all their energy and strength against Bartolomé, but bravely he bears the brunt of the attack, and his blows are falling like wintry rain. Every stroke from his sturdy arm tells, and one after another of the chief mutineers falls dead around him.

In a very short time the leader himself is hurled to the earth, though he is not slain. Then the rest of the mutineers flee in terror and confusion, while Porras is bound hand and foot, and carried off to the caravels in triumph.

Just two days after this the rebels sent a messenger to the caravel fort, begging for forgiveness, and making a full confession of all their crimes and blood-guiltiness.

Columbus freely forgave them. He would even have liberated Porras on parole, but this Bartolomé would not hear of. "No, brother, no," he said, "in this matter I must be consulted. I have spared his life, but a prisoner he must remain."

. . . . . .

It seemed now, however, as if not only Porras but everyone of those shipwrecked mariners would die in the island.

Sickness carried Pedro de Terreros off. He had been with Columbus from the very first, having gone out with him as steward in the *Santa Maria*. He had been promoted for his faithfulness to be captain, and had ever remained true to our hero in every danger, difficulty, or trial.

It must have been noted ere now by the reader, that Columbus was fond of promoting those he considered good men and true from the ranks to positions of trust. Roldan was an example, only we know how he turned out; Diego Salcedo another. At this time the latter held a position of importance at San Domingo, and never forgot his master.

So another long weary month of waiting went slowly, slowly by. Hope deferred made sick the hearts of many. Sick even unto death, and one after another of Columbus's men were buried on the beach.

"Fear not, but confide!"

These words were almost constantly in the mouth of our hero now. And he bore his own great sufferings with all the fortitude and cheerfulness he could command, in order to raise the spirits of those around him.

But one morning early, after passing a sadly restless and almost sleepless night, he crawled out of his cabin that he might breathe the delightful breeze that was stealing over the water from east and south. It calmed him, and helped to cool his fevered brow.

Presently Bartolomé came and sat down beside him.

Columbus smiled. "I have come to see the sunrise," he said. "Look, Bartolomé, look how the orange light spreads upwards over the sky! Bartolomé, that strange light seems to roll back the scroll of time, and make me once more a happy dreaming boy. Is it not beautiful, brother? Is it not? But see, see, what are those dark specks on the orange horizon? Tell me not my eyes deceive me, Bartolomé. Say not that they are birds."

Bartolomé had arisen. One hand shaded his eyes from the yellow glare of sunrise, his neck was craned, his sight strained. But for a few seconds only. Then his wild cry of joy and delight waked every soul on board the little sea-girt fort, and even the invalids crawled forth on hands and knees to see and feast their eyes on the welcome sight.

"Ships! Ships! We are saved! We are saved!"

CHAPTER X.

HIS WORK WAS OVER FOR EVER AND AYE.

YES, saved at last.

Had brave Diego Mendez been anything else save poor, Columbus and his men would not have been left so long in misery and suspense. But no one would listen to him, no one would either lend him a ship or pay for one.

But Salcedo, the Admiral's old servant, assisted Mendez in every way he could.

Escobar, the spy who had been sent by Ovando the vile to the shores where Columbus's caravels lay, came back with lies in his mouth. That is, lies to tell to the people. To Ovando he told the truth, and the two men gloated over the trouble and anguish that the Admiral was evidently enduring, and which both imagined must soon end in death. To the people he represented our hero as merely lying with his vessels for the sake of making repairs, in a bay on the coast of Jamaica.

This lie was for a time successful, but in his cups Escobar let out the truth, and even boasted that he and Ovando were leaving the Admiral to perish of disease and hunger, "to rot," he called it, "on the rotting wreckage of his little fleet."

Then indignation was aroused at last, and the very priests in their pulpits thundered against the injustice done to Spain's greatest hero.

Mendez and Salcedo soon after this were able to fit out and rig one caravel, and—false and deceitful to the last—Ovando sent another to accompany it, to save appearances.

And so the castaways were saved, and perhaps the most joyous meeting on board the caravels was that between the Admiral and his old and faithful servant Salcedo.

. . . . . .

That was a long and a stormy voyage which the Admiral had from San Domingo to Spain. Fancy if you can, reader, the horrors of tossing about on the Atlantic Ocean in a wretched caravel for two months and a half, short of provisions and water, the sea often making a clean breach over the little barque, the mainmast and mizzen gone by the board, and sail only possible on a wretched jury-mast.

But at last on the seventh day of November, fifteen hundred and four, the Admiral's caravel was safely anchored at San Lucas on the Guadalquivir.

Considering all the dangers and trials the great man had passed through, all his anxieties, and all his sicknesses, the marvel is that he lived to return from his final cruise, which had been so disastrous to his ships and crews, though so full of rich discovery and future promise.

He was back again, but the work of our hero at sea was over for ever and for aye. He was carried on a litter to the beautiful Carthusian monastery of St. Mary's, which stood on the banks of the lovely river, surrounded by groves and gardens.

In this delightful haven of peace and rest, with many a kind and warm-hearted friend by his side to cheer and comfort him, our hero remained for months.

Among these friends were bold and faithful Diego Mendez, and the Admiral's two brothers.

It needed all the consolation they and the holy fathers could render, however, to enable him to hold up under the great grief he felt at the death of Isabella the Queen, who expired at her residence in Medina del Campo on the

twenty-sixth of November. She had been ever to him a sincere and ardent friend, and now that she was gone he was inconsolable.

It is sad to think that in the last years of his life—and indeed they hardly extended to years, for he arrived at Seville in November, 1504, and breathed his last at Valladolid in May, 1506—the great and noble-hearted discoverer should not only have been in pain and grief, but in poverty as well.

All his domestic affairs had fallen into confusion during his absence, and he could neither recover his property nor the arrears of rents due to him.

It is sorrowful to think of his having to write to his son Diego in the following sad strain:—"I receive nothing of the revenue due to me. I live by borrowing. I have profited but little by my twenty years of service, with all their toils and perils, for at present I do not own a roof in Spain. If I desire to eat or sleep I have no resort but an inn, and for the most times have barely enough to pay my bills."

Nor had his seamen been paid by the government, and he seemed to feel for them in their poverty and distress far more than for himself, writing many and many a most pleading letter in their behalf, and yet some of these very men were of those who in Jamaica had rebelled against his authority, and endeavoured to kill him and his brother Bartolomé.

Nor did he forget his country and his sovereign in his last days, but was ever anxious that the very most should be made of all his important discoveries.

One man upon whom Columbus bestowed many favours about this time was Amerigo Vespucci, after whom the great continent has been so unjustly named. Amerigo did make

one voyage with Ojeda, if not two, but he was no sailor, never having been to sea until he had reached the ripe age of forty-seven.

. . . . . .

Columbus found peace at last. I think that is the best and simplest way of stating that he died.

In poverty it may have been, for he lay in a humble lodging-house in Valladolid. Yet his sons and his friends were with him at the end; among the latter were both Fieschi and Diego Mendez.

He died tranquilly. He died happy, his mind clear to the end, for the last words he spoke were:

"Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my soul."

Then the light went out.

. . . . . .

Just a word in conclusion concerning young Diego Columbus, the son of the great Admiral, and his brother Fernando.

Diego was a most polished and handsome officer and courtier, and among the many beautiful women then at the court of Spain was Doña Maria de Toledo y Roxas. The two were naturally thrown much together, and it is pleasing to know that not only was the marriage a desirable one in every way, but that it was a love match. Doña Maria was very lovely, but she was also very spirited, and being a near relative of King Ferdinand, she used her influence to regain for Diego all that his honoured father had lost. And succeeded too.

So in fifteen hundred and eight we find the young Admiral Diego, sailing away from Spain to take up his appointment as Governor of the Indies in lieu of Ovando the vile.

This wretch did not receive all his deserts, however,

although he died broken-hearted four days after he returned to his own country.

Fernando, who was a tall, handsome man of very suave and agreeable manners, never married. He devoted his life to learning, and his great work was the writing of his illustrious father's story.

. . . . . .

Columbus dead! Yes, it is well ere closing this little biography, that our minds should revert to him for a moment, that we should take leave of our hero last, good and gallant though his two sons were.

Columbus dead! Somehow I do not altogether like to think of his dying in that wretched plain-fronted lodging-house at Valladolid, with the harsh, unsympathetic sounds of life on the street beneath falling upon the ears of those who, awed and hushed, stood around his humble bed.

Better surely had he breathed his last in some quiet room of a palace of his own; more romantic had his last moments on earth been spent in the grand old Carthusian monastery on the Guadalquivir, or that his requiem had been sung by the summer winds sighing through the waving pine-trees around La Rabida.

Yet, thankful I feel, nevertheless, that the Providence which had protected him all his life had brought him home to Spain in peace to die. For he might have died at sea. He might have foundered at midnight in storm and darkness; he might have fallen by the blood-stained hands of mutineers; he might have expired in agony from the poison of some savage's arrow; or—pitiful to think of—he might have succumbed to fever or starvation in his sea-girt fort on that lone Jamaica shore.

Columbus dead! No, no, I will not have it. Great men like him never die.

And the weaver boy of Genoa, the simple-hearted sailor, the studious, persevering navigator, our brave and kindly Columbus, will live in the hearts of all who read his history for scores of ages yet to come.

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